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A tangled situation

New series Red Widow gives 'picking up after your husband' a new meaning PAGE 14

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AWARD-WINNING CHEF VIKRAM VIJ WANTS TO HELP YOU FIND TIME FOR FAMILY MEALS. HIS COOKING SHOW WILL BE BROADCAST LIVE ON METRONEWS.CA PAGE 27

TORY APPROVAL DROPS: POLL

Only one in three Albertans approve of Alison Redford's performance as premier, data from an online poll released Monday suggests. The survey conducted by ThinkHQ in February also shows the opposition Wildrose with more support among decided voters than the governing Tories. Notes from the survey suggest handling of the upcoming provincial budget is front and centre in the minds of voters. Story, page 3. THE CANADIAN PRESS ARCHIVE

'Long overdue' transit on way for city's S.E.

Access. Travel to new South Health Campus, city core to be made easier

JEREMY NOLAIS
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It's not an LRT line or even the SETWAY, but Calgary Transit is planning to roll ahead with some service improvements in the city's mobility-challenged southeast.

Starting Monday, a new route will roll through the fast-growing community of New Brighton and other communities will see extensions and increased bus frequency, according to transit planning manager Neil McKendrick.

"There's no question those folks down there do use transit and this has been long overdue," he said.

The improvements come as a result of strong ridership numbers in 2012 that led to higher-than-expected revenues. In all, $750,000 will be spent upgrading and enhancing service.

The new Route 152 will provide peak-hour transit service to all quadrants of New Brighton, which currently only sees a bus run through its southeastern outskirts, McKendrick said.

The bus will then connect up with a terminal at McKenzie Towne, allowing travellers to catch a connection on Route 406 to the newly opened South Health Campus or Route 302, which takes commuters downtown.

Route 302 will also extend down to the health campus once construction is done on 52nd Street S.E. Area alderman Shane Keating said he's heard that work could be completed by summer's end.

The enhancements come as Keating has begun publicly calling for exploring the use of a community revitalization levy (CRL) to fund the proposed $667-million southeast transitway, or SETWAY, a dedicated bus route that would provide express service in and out of the city's core.

Quoted

"What they are doing in many cases is simply catching up to the growth down there."
Ald. Shane Keating

That route could eventually provide the layout for a southeast LRT line; however, development of that appears to be at least a decade away.

Keating brought a motion before council to discuss the CRL funding model, which has proved successful in spurring the redevelopment of Calgary's East Village.

Keating said his own analysis of bus routes running through Ward 12, which he represents, indicates 20,000 residents in that area alone rely on transit daily.

"The need for transit in the southeast is just amazing," Keating said. "The ridership is great, it's just scattered."

McKendrick said Route 14 will also extend to the South Health Campus, past its current endpoint of the Somerset-Bridlewood LRT station. That route runs seven days a week.

As well, some of the revenue surplus will be used to continue funding a shuttle service at the Chinook LRT station, which is closed for construction to extend the platform to accommodate four-car trains.

Follow Jeremy Nolais on Twitter @Metro_Nolais

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Crime

Man with neo-Nazi ties gets life in jail for beating death

A founding member of a white-supremacist group in Calgary has been sentenced to life in prison for the random killing of an ailing man.

Tyler Sturrup, 28, pleaded guilty Monday to second-degree murder in the beating death of Mark Mariani.

Mariani was walking down a northwest alley, heading for his parked car, when he was savagely kicked and stomped on Oct. 3, 2010.

The 47-year-old was frail with Crohn's disease and unable to defend himself.

Sturrup, who helped found the Western European Bloodline supremacist group, was arrested seven months later.

He admitted in court to attacking Mariani for no reason.

A judge, calling the killing cowardly and vicious, ruled Sturrup won't be eligible to apply for parole for 10 years.

Mariani's family read victim-impact statements in court describing how he fought his disease while caring for others.

"That's the kind of guy Mark was," said his brother Dino. "He really was. He was a generous, giving man."

He called the guilty plea a surprise and relief but said the case is not over yet.

Robert Reitmeier, 25, is also charged with second-degree murder in the death of Mariani. Police have said he also had ties to the same supremacist group.

He is set to stand trial later this year.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Wildrose Leader Danielle Smith has criticized the Tory government for making promises in the last provincial election it couldn't keep and says a new poll indicates trust in the Conservatives has suffered greatly as a result. JEFF MCINTOSH/THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

'Absence of an answer' dogging Tories: Pollster

Downward slide.
Facing hefty revenue shortfall, Conservatives are lagging behind Wildrose in voter support, numbers say

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Just days before the release of what's expected to be a tough provincial budget, a new poll indicates support for the governing Tories has dropped below that of the Opposition Wildrose and only one-third of Albertans approve of the job being done by Premier Alison Redford.

Released Monday, the online survey from ThinkHQ Public Affairs Inc. was conducted in February, right around the time the Tories began warning of the implications of a then-predicted $6-billion revenue shortfall. That figure has since been revised to $4 billion.

It shows the Wildrose receiving 38 per cent support among decided voters, compared to 26 per cent support for the Tories. The NDP and Liberals netted 16 and 13 per cent support, respectively.

ThinkHQ pollster Marc Henry said it appears the looming budget has "enormous implications" for the Redford government.

"What's missing from that narrative is, 'Well, OK, what's the path out of this?'" Henry said. "Their message seems to be quite scattered in and around 'What's the solution?' That absence of an answer is really at the root of the softness in their polling numbers."

But Deputy Premier Thomas Lukaszuk, reached while doing some volunteer work building a playground in Vietnam, dismissed the data.

"I don't read them, I don't care about them," he said. "I can commission a poll for you tomorrow that shows it the other way around."

Wildrose Leader Danielle Smith, meanwhile, declined to discuss support among decided voters but said she was troubled by findings in the poll suggesting Redford's job-approval rating is just 33 per cent.

"I think people feel betrayed," Smith said. "I think they feel there was dishonesty and I think they don't trust that this government knows what to do to get out of it — I think that comes through loud and clear."

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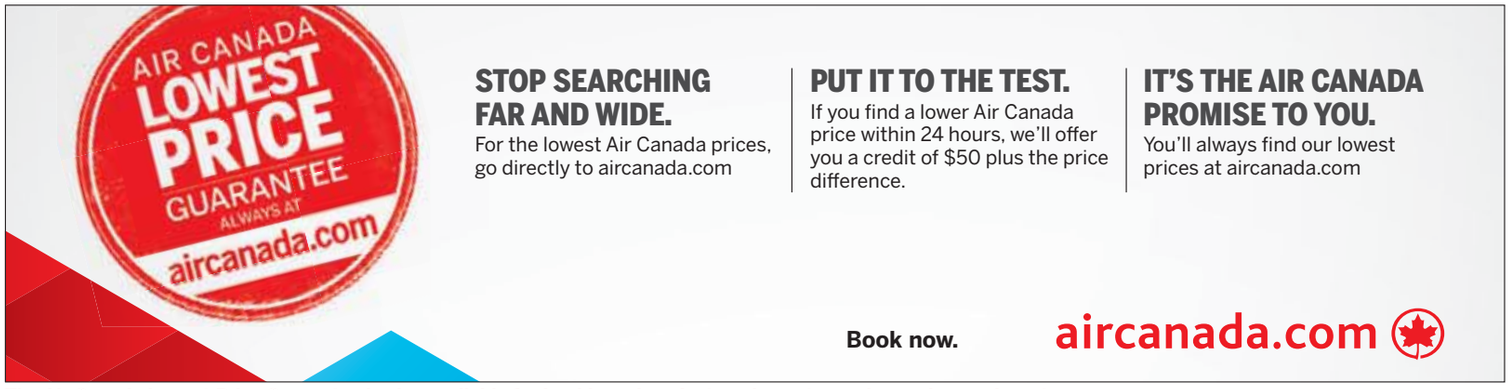
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How bad will Calgary's school squeeze be? Ask Rocky View

Herons Crossing School in Airdrie was financed independently by Rocky View Schools, which continues to struggle with a system-wide utilization rate of 88.7 per cent. COURTESY OF ROCKY VIEW SCHOOLS

Struggles ahead. School utilization rates in city could soon mirror those in bedroom communities

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Without a classroom to spare, Penny Foord's kids and dozens of others spent much of the fall learning in boardrooms at Rocky View Schools headquarters in Airdrie.

Finally some reprieve came in November, as the school division opened its own independently financed school, Herons Crossing, and moved in 183 of its littlest ones.

"We didn't really have a choice," said Foord, who serves on the school council. "Without it, I don't know where our kids would have gone."

The measures taken to find space for students in the rapidly growing city northeast of Calgary are just one example of life at the 88.7 per cent school utilization rate being reported presently by Rocky View.

Now, the Calgary Board of Education has predicted it could face much of the same in the years ahead, with an 87 per cent utilization rate forecast within three years. The Calgary Catholic School District predicts it will follow close behind at 85 per cent utilization within two to three years.

Calgary trustees have long bemoaned a four-year freeze on new school funding for the Catholic district and a five-year freeze for the public board.

Officials pointed out Sunday that even if funding for new projects were announced tomorrow — rumours are money may come despite a $4-billion shortfall being faced by the province — it would take three years to fully construct a school.

Growing pains

Over-capacity schools are everywhere

John Wheatley, director of facility planning for Rocky View Schools, pointed out that space issues extend well beyond the well-documented troubles in Airdrie.

In Cochrane, for example, Glenbow Elementary's capacity is expected to reach 115 per cent this fall and could hit 166 per cent by 2016. Mitford Middle School in that town could also hit 134 per cent capacity over the same timeframe.

"Our schools are full," Wheatley said. "Because we are in the suburbs, we don't have any options of sending kids to other schools."

Rocky View school council member Penny Foord was quick to point out Airdrie is far from out of the woods and said she feels sorry for Calgary families, who could soon face similar struggles. METRO

Quoted

"It's not fun and it's not fair. Our kids are the ones that ultimately suffer."

Penny Foord, Rocky View school council member, on the struggle to find space for students

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Political strategist. Flanagan says he was trapped into child-porn comments

A former high-level political strategist criticized for his comments on child pornography says he was led into a trap.

Tom Flanagan, a political science professor at the University of Calgary, says in a guest column in the National Post that the question that prompted his controversial remarks came out of left field and had nothing to do with the native-issues forum where he was speaking.

"In 45 years of university teaching, I have tried to deal with every question my students have asked, so I forged ahead here, unaware that this was a trap, not a bona fide question — a dumb mistake for someone of my age and experience," Flanagan wrote Monday in the column.

He said he was unaware that his remarks were being recorded on video. That video was uploaded to the Internet last Wednesday, prompting every group Flanagan was publicly associated with to sever any real or perceived ties with him.

"I certainly have no sympathy for child molesters, but I do have some grave doubts about putting people in jail because of their taste in pictures," Flanagan tells the crowd in the cellphone footage.

Flanagan apologized Thursday after the footage from the forum in Lethbridge, Alta., went viral, and did so again in the column. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quoted

"The last thing I would want to do is to inflict more hurt on people who've already suffered too much. It still bothers me that I did this, and I can't say how sorry I am about it. I apologize again, though I know that's not enough." Tom Flanagan

Merge ambulance dispatch centres, report urges

Systemic problems. Government pledges to respond swiftly to recommendations

RYAN TUMILTY
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Alberta will push ahead with plans to consolidate ambulance dispatch, after a provincial report determined that delays in that plan caused problems in the system.

The Health Quality Council of Alberta (HQCA) released its report on the provincial ambulance takeover on Monday and the government accepted all of its recommendations.

"The concept of consolidation itself wasn't the problem. The problem is it only got partially done," said Dr. John Cowell, CEO of the HQCA. "You had the existing system and the new system operating concurrently."

Cowell's report also recommends instituting common standards for ambulances and 911 call centres and for more work to be done on collecting better data.

He said the province can still contract out ambulances, but has to make sure they are managed effectively.

"They need to have standards regardless of where that ambulance hails from," he said.

Health Minister Fred Horne said the province will move quickly on the recommendations. "The key issue that must be addressed as quickly as possible is consolidating the dispatch centres," he said.

The province currently has 12 such centres and will end up with one in Calgary, one in Edmonton and a satellite centre in Peace River once the consolidation is complete.

From left: Municipal Affairs Minister Doug Griffiths, Health Minister Fred Horne and CEO of the Health Quality Council of Alberta Dr. John Cowell take questions about the council's report on ambulance services. RYAN TUMILTY/METRO

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Blizzard aftermath. No snow event declared yet

Sunday's snow has not resulted in a snow-route parking ban, but officials will reassess the situation on Tuesday.

Transportation manager Mac Logan was asked at Monday's council meeting why the city didn't declare a snow event during Sunday's blizzard. He replied that it was because the bans apply to secondary routes and "our resources were tied up continually going over the primary routes" that day.

"There's no point in calling a parking ban when we don't have the equipment to go out and do it," Logan said.

"We would be unnecessarily inconveniencing the public."

The city plans to "reassess road conditions" after Tuesday's commute and provide an update on the parking situation.

ROBSON FLETCHER/METRO

Donation. $15M to help create child-rehab centre

An unprecedented $15-million donation will help build a pediatric pain and rehabilitation centre in Calgary, the Alberta Children's Hospital Foundation said on Monday.

"We are deeply humbled by such incredible generosity," foundation president Saifa Koonar said in a statement.

The donation, from Clay Riddell and his family, is the largest ever made to the foundation. Riddell said the gift is in memory of his late wife, Vi Riddell, who was a nurse at the ACH. "This hospital and the children who need it always held a special place in Vi's heart," he said.

The centre will be named the Vi Riddell Children's Pain and Rehabilitation Centre.

The donation will allow the hospital to "take a quantum leap forward in the care we provide," said Dr. Peter Farran, a pediatric anesthesiologist and pain-medicine specialist.

ROBSON FLETCHER/METRO

Folk fest. Alabama Shakes coming in July

Alabama Shakes is the latest addition to this year's Calgary Folk Music Festival.

The four-piece outfit from Athens, Ala., will headline the first night of the festival, which runs July 25 to 28 at Prince's Island Park. The band's debut album, Boys & Girls, a blend of soul, blues, roots and garage rock, won rave reviews, and the hit song Hold On was No. 1 on Rolling Stone's list of the 50 best songs of 2012.

Tickets for the 34th annual folk fest go on sale April 25 at calgaryfolkfest.com after its full lineup announcement. METRO

Brittany Howard will lead the Alabama Shakes at the Calgary folk fest. MIKE LAWRIE/GETTY IMAGES

Down Under. Up to 15 Australian miners fired over Harlem Shake video

Up to 15 miners were fired from their high-paying jobs in an Australian gold mine after a Harlem Shake performance underground was deemed a safety hazard, a newspaper reported on Monday.

A YouTube video shows eight miners wearing safety gear while performing the convulsive dance in the Agnew Gold Mine last week. The West Australian newspaper quoted a sacked worker who wouldn't give his name as saying up to 15 people were fired, including some who watched the performance but did not participate.

Mine owner Barminco considered the stunt a safety issue and a breach of its "core values of safety, integrity and excellence," according to a dismissal letter cited by the paper.

The letter noted that Barminco would not allow the dancing workers "to be subcontracted by Barminco at any site domestically and globally."

Harlem what?

Up to 4,000 videos of the Harlem Shake are uploaded on the Internet daily.

- **Chart topper.** The song Harlem Shake, recorded by Brooklyn disc jockey and producer Baauer, is currently No. 2 on the Australian singles chart.

It's not clear from the video what safety issues are raised. The dancing miners wear helmets, but five are shirtless. The sacked worker told the newspaper that shirts had been removed to ensure the Barminco name did not appear in the video.

Australia is experiencing a mining boom, with thousands of workers attracted by high salaries to remote Outback mines. The West Australian said the miners who lost their jobs had six-figure salaries.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Police hunt suspect in death of young family

Newborn lost. Baby delivered after parents were killed in car crash died early Monday

Members of Brooklyn's Hasidic Jewish community demand justice, a spokesman said. JOHN MINCHILLO/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A close-knit ultra-Orthodox Jewish community in Brooklyn was plunged into a new round of mourning Monday by the death of a baby who was delivered by cesarean section after his parents were killed in a hit-and-run crash a day earlier.

Police hunted for the suspected driver, identified as Julio Acevedo, saying he was barrelling down a residential street in a BMW at 100 km/h, twice the speed limit, early Sunday when he collided with a car hired to take the couple to the hospital because the wife was feeling ill.

The baby was buried near the fresh graves of his parents, Nachman and Raizy Glauber, both 21, according to Isaac Abraham, a spokesman for the Hasidic Jewish community. About 1,000 community members turned out for the young couple's funeral a day earlier.

The baby weighed only about four pounds when he was delivered, friends said. He died of extreme prematurity, according to the city medical examiner's office.

Acevedo, 44, was arrested last month on a charge of driving while under the influence, and the case is pending. He served about a decade in prison in the 1990s for manslaughter.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Cardinals to talk corruption before election

Cardinals said Monday that they want to talk to Vatican managers about allegations of corruption and cronyism within the top levels of the Catholic Church before they elect the next pope, evidence that leaked papal documents is setting up one of the most unpredictable papal elections in recent times. ANDREW MEDICHINI/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

One-day visit

Queen returns from hospital

Queen Elizabeth II returned home on Monday after receiving treatment for a stomach infection that prompted a brief and rare hospitalization for the 86-year-old monarch.

A smiling Elizabeth walked out of King Edward VII Hospital on Monday afternoon, bidding farewell to staff outside.

The queen cancelled engagements for this week due to the bout of gastroenteritis, although she could be back to work by next week.

It was the monarch's first hospitalization in 10 years but it set off few alarm bells in Britain, where she is seen as being in excellent health. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Election bloodshed evokes earlier pain

Kenya. Nineteen dead amid violence, but more could perish if country sees repeat of 2007 vote

Officials estimated a turnout of nearly 10 million. BEN CURTIS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kenya's presidential election drew millions of eager voters on Monday, but the vote was marred by violence that left 19 people dead, including four policemen hacked to death by machete-wielding separatists.

Officials urged voters not to be intimidated amid fears the impending election results could spark another round of ethnic-related bloodshed. More than 1,000 people died after the 2007 vote.

The election is the first presidential poll under a new constitution designed to prevent the ethnic violence of 2007-08. Officials estimated the turnout at 70 per cent.

The voting got off to a bloody start when a group of 200 separatists set a trap that killed four police officers in the coastal city of Mombasa, Insp. Gen. David Kimaiyo said.

The separatist group — the Mombasa Republican Council (MRC) — had threatened election-day attacks. The MRC believes Kenya's coast should be an independent country.

A tally found that four police and three MRC members died in Mombasa, while six government officials, four MRC members and two civilians died in attacks near the coastal city of Kilifi, all according to police and mortuary officials.

After the polls closed, gunshots and an explosion rang out in the city of Garissa as gunmen stormed two polling stations, said Farah Maalim, deputy speaker of parliament. Security forces responded to the attack and the gunmen fled. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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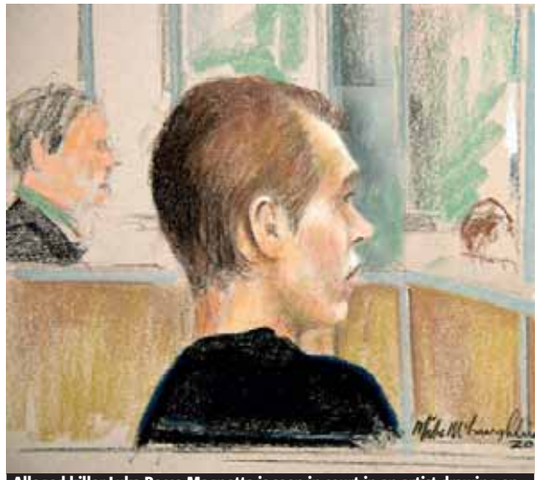
Magnotta wants hearing kept out of public eye

Dismemberment case. Lawyer for accused asks for Montreal courtroom to be cleared of all but judge, lawyers, clerk

When Luka Magnotta returns before a judge for his preliminary hearing next week in Montreal, he'll seek to have the public banned entirely from the courtroom.

While a publication ban on evidence heard at a preliminary hearing is normal, Magnotta's lawyer has also asked to bar everyone except the judge, the lawyers in the case and the court clerk from the room.

The motion states that the grounds for the request stem from an unspecified reason related to Magnotta's personal and medical history, which have not been disclosed in the document.



Alleged killer Luka Rocco Magnotta is seen in court in an artist drawing on Wednesday, Jan. 9, in Montreal. Magnotta is charged with first-degree murder in the slaying and dismemberment of Chinese engineering student Jun Lin. MIKE MCLAUGHLIN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

The motion was filed in Quebec Court last Thursday by Luc Leclair, Magnotta's Toronto-based lawyer. It will be debated next Monday.

Magnotta is charged with first-degree murder and other charges in the slaying and dismemberment of Chinese-born student Jun Lin last May.

Magnotta became the subject of an international manhunt after parts of Lin's body began turning up across the country.

The attempts to track him down made headlines around the world.

A spokesman for the Crown prosecutor's office says this morning that there won't be any comment until after the motion is debated.

Magnotta's preliminary hearing is expected to last at least two weeks and several dates could be added in June, if necessary.

His brief appearances since his arrest have been the subject of heavy media coverage. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Ashley Smith. Inmate was treatable, court hears

Troubled young inmate Ashley Smith wanted to work on her behaviour to get out of her near-constant segregation, but before any real progress could be made she was shipped off to yet another institution, an inquest heard Monday.

Smith had been in secure isolation at a youth facility before she was transferred to the Nova Institution for Women in Truro, N.S., on Oct. 31, 2006.

Psychologist Allister Webster, who worked at Nova while Smith was there, only ended up spending a total of 21 days assessing or treating Smith. In the few months she was at Nova she self-harmed and otherwise acted out a lot, but had also signed off on a therapy plan to get out of segregation, Webster said.

"There wasn't much time to do anything beyond trying to set some groundwork that we might be able to build on, and then she was gone," he said.

She eventually withdrew her consent for treatment, but Webster still believed she could be helped, he said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Child sex abuse

Former priest, 90, gets house arrest

A retired Catholic priest has been sentenced to six months of house arrest after pleading guilty to sex crimes dating back more than 50 years.

Father William Hodgson Marshall, 90, pleaded guilty Monday in a Windsor, Ont., courtroom to indecent assault involving two teenage boys in Saskatchewan in the 1950s and 60s.

Marshall is currently on parole after pleading guilty in 2011 to 17 counts of sexually abusing children while teaching at schools in Windsor, Toronto and Sudbury, Ont.

Defence lawyer Andrew Bradie said the sentence was fair. After the term of house arrest, Marshall will be on probation for 30 months.

CKLW/THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Climate change. Obama picks 'great team' to head environment, energy depts.

As Canada continues to herald its collaboration with the U.S. on climate and energy, President Barack Obama has announced his picks to helm the powerful Environmental Protection Agency and the Energy Department — two people who will now have indirect sway over Canadian policy.

Obama tapped his so-called green quarterback, Gina McCarthy, to become head of the EPA on Monday. The pick represents a promotion for McCarthy, a top agency official who's been a fierce champion for tougher carbon emissions standards for years.

Ernest Moniz, a nuclear physicist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, is the president's pick as energy secretary. Obama praised him as a "brilliant scientist" who knows the U.S. can produce more energy while protecting the climate and the environment.

"So these two ... they're going to be making sure that we're investing in American energy, that we're doing everything that we can do to combat the threat of climate change, that we're going to be creating jobs and economic opportunity," the president said in the East Room of the White House.

Nuclear physicist Ernest Moniz
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

"They are going to be a great team."

He urged the U.S. Senate to confirm both picks soon.

McCarthy's nomination, in particular, has delighted environmentalists, who are still reeling from the U.S. State Department's near-blessing of TransCanada's Keystone XL pipeline last week.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Family keepsakes removed from rubble at sinkhole site

Crews on Sunday razed more than half the home where a sinkhole swallowed Jeffrey Bush, late Thursday in Seffner, Fla. Crews managed to salvage some keepsakes for family members who lived there, including the family photo seen here. CHRIS O'MEARA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Defence department. Cost delays purchase of 65 jets

The Harper government's plan to buy the oft-maligned F-35 fighter is expected to face another blow, with deep spending cuts about to unfold in the United States.

Defence Minister Peter MacKay says the cuts, known as sequestration, could affect "specific military procurements" in this country.

MacKay told a breakfast event at the Economic Club of Canada that the cuts could slow down the production line of "certain aircraft and certain procurements that we have a direct interest in."

Canada's purchase of 65 jets has been put on hold while a Public Works secretariat overseeing the replacement of the existing CF-18 fighter fleet looks at alternatives and their potential cost. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Production slowdown

The long-delayed and costly F-35 program is considered by U.S. lawmakers a prime target for the budget axe.

- A production slowdown would be a problem for Canada, since the CF-18s will be considered exhausted by 2020.

Taco stand in Mexico

Gunmen killed online reporter

Gunmen shot dead an online journalist while he ate dinner at a taco stand in the border town of Ojinaga, Mexico, across the border from Texas, authorities said Monday. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Nobel Peace Prize

Nobel noms are in

A record 259 nominations were received for this year's Nobel Peace Prize. Candidates include a Pakistani girl shot by the Taliban and a U.S. soldier accused of leaking material to WikiLeaks.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Israel on alert after locust invasion ahead of Passover

Mideast. Modest swarm stirs fears of agricultural losses

A swarm of locusts crossed into Israel from neighbouring Egypt Monday, raising fears that Israel could be hit with a biblical plague ahead of the Passover holiday.

Israel sent out planes to spray pesticides over agricultural fields to prevent damage by the small swarm, which numbers about 2,000 locusts, said Dafna Yurista, a spokeswoman for the Agriculture Ministry. The ministry also set up an emergency hotline and asked Israelis to be vigilant in reporting locust sightings.

All this comes ahead of the weeklong Passover festival, which recounts the biblical story of the Israelite exodus from Egypt. According to the Bible, a huge swarm of locusts was the eighth of 10 plagues God imposed on Egyptians to persuade Pharaoh to free the ancient Hebrews from slavery. Pharaoh did not agree to let them go until after the 10th plague, the death of the firstborn in every Egyptian family.

This year Passover begins March 25.

Quoted

"(The locusts) may not have ruined Pharaoh, but they could ruin us."

Farmer Tzachi Rimon to Israel's Channel 10 TV, fearing a potential onslaught of the pests. Locusts can have a devastating effect on agriculture by quickly stripping crops.

Yurista said the number of locusts was relatively small, but "just because they aren't many doesn't mean we are ignoring them."

Locusts are known to move with the wind, and the swarm was swept eastwards from Egypt, said Amir Ayali, who heads Tel Aviv University's zoology department, on Channel 10 TV. The last time Israel experienced a major locust outbreak was in 2004.

Egypt's state news agency MENA said more than 17,000 locusts were exterminated in an area spanning more than 84,000 acres.

No significant economic losses were reported, as the locusts were not mature enough to cause damage and did not remain long in the area to feed. Other affected areas were mostly desert.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Holy handover!

The Dark Knight rises ... in England

A man dressed as Batman has brought a suspected burglar into a police station in northern England.

West Yorkshire Police said Monday that they do not know the identity of the man who appeared in "a full Batman outfit" and turned in a 27-year-old suspect to police in Bradford on Feb. 25.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Unhappy hour

U.S. to UN: No boozers at the table

The United States thinks the United Nations has a drinking problem.

Ambassador Joseph M. Torsella, who represents the U.S. on the UN's budget committee, said Monday that the tense process of negotiating the world body's annual budget is made more complicated by diplomats who turn up drunk.

The UN budget is finalized in December, when holiday parties apparently lead to some revelry spilling over into budget talks.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Paws off the gun

Ivan, a three-year-old police dog, takes an aggressive stance under the control of his handler, Lt. John Pickles, outside the Essex County Correctional Facility in Middleton, Mass. Monday. Police say Ivan was searching for a gun in a snowbank and accidentally pulled the trigger with his paw, firing the weapon. No humans, or dogs, were hurt.

ELISE AMENDOLA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Mortgages. Interest rates are expected to head south

Despite ongoing concerns about high levels of debt, analysts say interest rates in Canada are going nowhere except perhaps down — as demonstrated by one major bank's decision to shave the rate it charges for five-year mortgages.

The Bank of Montreal has dropped its posted five-year fixed mortgage rate by 0.10 points to 2.99 per cent in an effort to attract new borrowers ahead of the important spring real estate market.

Other banks may follow suit, although analysts note that many borrowers have been able to negotiate a 2.99 rate or lower even when the posted rate among major Canadian banks was at 3.09 per cent

The concern is that with teaser mortgage rates like the one announced Sunday by BMO, Canadians will continue to invest in real estate and push home prices up, with potentially dire consequences for the economy and homeowners.

In a statement, Finance Minister Jim Flaherty said he has taken several steps — including reducing the maximum amortization period to 25 years from 30 in July — to discourage marginal buyers from being lured into taking on a bigger mortgage than they can afford over the lifetime of the loan.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

GOD'S PROMISE
If Jesus sets you free, you are truly free.
(John 8:36)
@HISPROMISES4ME

Signs of the times: Target opens its doors

Surprise! U.S. discount giant Target has fast-tracked the opening of three southern Ontario stores, meaning the retailer's much-anticipated arrival in Canada gets underway in earnest Tuesday morning. The three debut locations are in the communities of Guelph, Fergus and Milton, all west of Toronto. What does Canadian Tire think of Target's appearance north of the border? These signs, in the parking lot of the new Target store in Guelph, give a hint. "We've never publicly said 'This is our grand opening date' ... because we wanted flexibility to make sure we open when we are ready," said Target Canada president Tony Fisher on Monday. Overall, Target is expected to open between 125 and 135 locations in Canada. Another 21 stores will open this month throughout Ontario, and then Target will begin moving into provinces in the West and eventually into Quebec. None of those opening dates have been announced. DAVE CHIDLEY/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Energy drink debate

Monster argues 'caffeine toxicity' did not kill teen

Monster Beverage is hitting back at a U.S. lawsuit alleging its energy drinks were responsible for the death of a 14-year-old girl, saying that no blood test was performed to confirm she died of "caffeine toxicity." The suit filed by her family said she went into cardiac arrest after drinking two 680-gram cans of Monster drinks in a 24-hour period. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Market Minute

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TSX 12,707.41(-65.71)

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SHE SAYS

Jessica Napier
metronews.ca

The childhood adage that "my body's no body's body but mine" doesn't exactly hold up in a culture obsessed with judging other people's physical appearance. It seems our private bodies — and women's especially — are a public commodity to be consumed, discussed and evaluated.

Much of the discussion around the recent Academy Awards broadcast focused on physical bodies rather than bodies of work. Host Seth MacFarlane dedicated an entire song-and-dance routine to breasts and then went on to praise the female celebrities in attendance for "contracting the flu" (i.e., starving themselves) in order to whittle their waistlines before the ceremony. Best supporting actress winner Anne Hathaway received much more attention for her nipples than her on-stage performance during the Les Misérables number. Similarly, in 2012 Angelina Jolie's right leg dominated the red-carpet conversation on screen and online; one year later there are still over 10 different Twitter accounts dedicated to her exposed limb, although the original @AngiesRightLeg account has since been shut down.

Lena Dunham, the creator and star of HBO series Girls, has been applauded and criticized for deliberately exposing her naked and normal-looking (gasp!) body in almost every episode of her hit TV show. Her unapologetically average flesh — Dunham actually happens to have some weight on her stomach, butt and thighs as opposed to 99 percent of the other women in Hollywood — takes centre stage in much of the discussion surrounding the show. Ballsy writing and poignant story lines be damned — let's talk about those stomach rolls!

Of course, it's not just celebrities who are subjected to this form of superficial scrutiny; the media has a tendency to reduce public figures to, well, figures.

News stories about Michelle Obama spotlight her wardrobe choices, sculpted arms and recent haircut (bangs!), while Justin Trudeau's voluminous hair has even managed to secure its own Twitter account with over 1,000 followers.

There's no doubt that other people's bodies are fascinating, but it's scary to think that lustrous locks might help an ambitious politician become the next prime minster.

Twitter parody accounts that give individual limbs their own online personality might be provide some cheap LOLs, but this relentless objectification of body parts demonstrates just how lazy our generation of smartphone-wielding armchair critics has become.

Sadly, it's just so much easier for us to admire Trudeau for his hair than educate ourselves on his policies or to gawk at Dunham's exposed butt than consider the implications of the sexual politics at work on her show.

When we focus our attention on a person's body — what it should look like and how much of it we want to see — we're not only ignoring more significant conversations, we're elevating the importance of the body and undermining the true value of the individual.

Follow Jessica Napier on Twitter @MetroSheSays

ZOOM

Earth's cut is the deepest

CONTRIBUTED

Scientists probe our planet

Scientists are boldly going deep, deep underground to study the movement of carbon kilometres below the Earth's surface. Early results from the historic 10-year, $500-million research project outline strange new worlds right out of science fiction: colonies of microbes millions of years old, hydrogen-eating life forms and natural gas seeping from chemical processes within the bedrock itself.

The discovery of vast reserves of buried carbon may suggest solutions to the climate-change crisis on the surface. And the Earth's deepest recesses also suggest how life might behave on other planets.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Volcanoes spit it back

What Deep Carbon has found — so far — is that unimaginably huge amounts of buried carbon have been involved in an intricate and stately dance with life since almost the beginning of the planet.

As long as 3.8 billion years ago, biological processes were breaking down the young Earth's relatively uniform rock, concentrating their carbon and forming different rock types.

The slow drift of continental plates drives carbon-rich rocks from the surface deep underground. Eventually, that carbon comes back as erupting volcanoes belch carbon dioxide, linking the processes of the surface to underground. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Clickbait

From Timon and Pumbaa to Kung Fu Panda, there is nothing like a talking animal. These top animal Twitter accounts keep you updated on the latest from your furry or feathery friends.

@horse_ebooks
"I adore key limes and am always on the lookout for new ways" Inexplicably, this spambot set up to flog e-books has acquired over 150,000 followers. But follow and you'll see why — his/her zen-like tweets confuse and delight, even if they tend to cut off halfway for no reason.

@contrastamanda
"I just squirted 12.3 kgs of milk out of my teats in 5:44 minutes. What did you do today?" Amanda, a real-life Ontario cow, was hooked up to Twitter by her farm in 2010. Sadly, no moos have come from Amanda recently. We hope she hasn't gone to the giant steakhouse in the sky.

@50ShadesChicken
"It's not food porn till you get out the twine." Parody accounts on Twitter are a curious mixture of pain and pleasure, but this account for a best-selling poultry parody cookbook has even managed to entice users who haven't heard of the notorious E.L. James novel.

Twitter

@metropicks: See these city-living "penalty cards"? http://ow.ly/iblbu What sidewalk behaviour annoys *you* most? Tell Metro!

@Dragoniser: @metropicks Idiots on there cell phones not watching where they are walking.

@goodnighthush: @metropicks on rainy days when people walk under awnings with their open umbrellas not moving or adjusting for those without one.

Want to get your tweets here? Follow @metropicks on Twitter for the best of Metro's writers and take part in our daily poll.

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DVD review

The Master

Director. Paul Thomas Anderson

Stars. Philip Seymour Hoffman, Joaquin Phoenix, Amy Adams

Joaquin Phoenix plays raging id to Philip Seymour Hoffman's controlling ego in Paul Thomas Anderson's rich Freudian bromance. Circa 1950, Phoenix's Freddie Quell returns stateside as an alcoholic drifter following Second World War navy service. He meets by chance Hoffman's Lancaster Dodd, the smug, powerful and charismatic leader of a quasi-religion known as The Cause (read Scientology). The two vividly sketched characters engage in mind games as Dodd, whose minions call him The Master, attempts to redeem the fallen sailor — or is it the other way around?

PETER HOWELL

The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn — Part 2

Director. Bill Condon

Stars. Kristen Stewart, Robert Pattinson, Taylor Lautner

In this fifth and concluding chapter (finally!) of the young vampire romance franchise, a dreary series manages to find a pulse. It does so not through the drama, which is goofier than ever, but through comedy, some of which is actually intended.

PETER HOWELL

Star of Red Widow weaves a tangled web

Art imitates life. Radha Mitchell finds personal life parallels in her character in new CTV Two series

NED EHRBAR
Metro World News in Hollywood

Radha Mitchell comes to television with Red Widow, playing a woman forced to pick up her husband's criminal activities after he's killed. It's juicy stuff, to be sure, and just what the Australian actress — known for film roles such as Silent Hill, Finding Neverland and Man on Fire — had been looking for.

"Marta Walraven is pretty much my dream character to play," Mitchell says.

"Basically she's a woman who has been avoiding her criminal upbringing by living the life of a soccer mom and is suddenly dragged into a world that she's been trying to avoid pretty much her whole life when her husband is assassinated in relation to a drug incident. And in the process she discovers things about herself and talents that she didn't know she had."

Mitchell says she relates quite a bit to her character, though she's wary to get into specifics. "Well, I guess the parts that I relate to I probably wouldn't really want to share," she says with a laugh. "But in terms of being thrown into a situation, I think even just coming to America when I did initially was a very exciting adventure and was at times intimidating and scary. I came out when I was, like, 23 or something. I didn't know anybody and I was staying on my manager's couch. But it was probably one of the most exciting junctures in my life because, you know, it was all about what could happen. I mean it wasn't scary in the same way, but yeah."

So with a move to television — something very common for film actors these days — does that mean Mitchell's not looking for movies right now?

"I'm over films," she jokes. "I was actually sort of at this point in my life. And also, I feel like exciting characters are on television right now."

Red Widow airs on CTV Two on Sundays at 10 p.m. EST. HANDOUT

A whole new world

"I think even just coming to America when I did initially was a very exciting adventure and was at times intimidating and scary"

Radha Mitchell on relating to her character in Red Widow

When Glee met Archie. Hit TV series and iconic comic join for story arc

Blaine Anderson and Kevin Keller? Betty Cooper and Noah Puckerman? Things are not as they usually are in the halls of William McKinley and Riverdale high schools.

And that's just the way it should be, said Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa, who writes for Glee and penned the four-issue story arc, Archie Meets Glee, that sees Riverdale and McKinley's famous — and vocally talented — students come together in a crossover crash that blends the snark of the television show and the long-standing wholesomeness of Archie, Jughead and Betty, among others.

The two worlds combine this week in the pages of Archie Comics No. 641, a story drawn by artist Dan Parent that extends through issue 644.

Show creator Ryan Murphy said the story honours and celebrates "the two worlds. Not just their similarities, but their differences, which I've think we've done."

Glee and Archie come together. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

So what prompted it? A friendship between Aguirre-Sacasa and Archie Comics co-CEO Jon Goldwater, who met New York Comic Con in 2011. "The Archie brand is very versatile and we're continuing to explore our limits every day," Goldwater said of the latest crossover.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bieber contest winner

Fan can't Beliebe her luck

Fans from all over the world entered Metro's two week "I Beliebe in Love" contest for a chance to meet Justin Bieber. But it was 15-year-old Valeria Viteri, from Peru, who captured our Global Jury's attention and the most votes (an impressive 9,022!). Viteri will have a once-in-a-lifetime VIP experience during Bieber's "Believe" tour in Europe and will even get to meet the pop star. Viteri couldn't stop screaming when she got the phone call notifying her she'd won.

How do you feel about meeting Justin Bieber?
I am extremely excited and still cannot believe it's true. It means so much to me, to meet him and tell him how much I love him. I hope I don't get star struck.

How have you prepared yourself for this?
The day of the deadline I came running home from school, checked the Facebook page and there it was: I was the winner! I am so happy and want to thank all of my friends who supported me with their votes.

MWN

Adele ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

I'd like to thank my mom: Adele's son gets his own golden statue

Clearly receiving an Oscar statue for Skyfall gave Adele some ideas. Back home in London after last week's Academy Awards, the singer posted a photo to Twitter of her best song Oscar alongside a smaller replica award that read Best Son, a souvenir she picked up for her baby boy, born in October. "Thanks for having us, Hollywood," she wrote along with the photo.

Ben Affleck

Move paps, get out the way: Ben and his space bubble

Ben Affleck is used to a certain amount of paparazzi attention, but sometimes enough is enough — like late last week when some photographers got too close for comfort around Affleck and his four-year-old daughter, Seraphina. The paparazzi reportedly swarmed the father and daughter outside of her school, according to Us Weekly. "She was asking for them to stop," a source says, adding that Affleck asked them numerous times to back off. "The paps said they needed to be 'that close.'"

Twitter

@ElizabethBanks
Do you have a bad relationship w tequila? Maybe you just haven't met the right one...

@ElizabethHurley
I adore my puppy Mia but she is proving to be VERY DIFFICULT to house train. anyone else been challenged by cocker spaniels?!

@Bitchuation
why do people want an oscar so much? i take mine out and look at it five or six times a day and i feel nothing.

Biebs explains why he bashed his own birthday

Justin Bieber

Justin Bieber is taking issue with reports that he had the "worst birthday" — as he referred to Friday's celebration via Twitter — because some of his friends were barred entry to the nightclub where he was celebrating.

"The funny moment when people believe I brought underage people to a club," Bieber says in a post on Instagram. "I love how the club wanted to give the press another reason to why we didn't stay at their weak-ass club so they wouldn't look bad for me walking in and right back out."

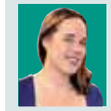
As for what was behind his enigmatic two-word tweet? "I said 'worst birthday,' but that was due to dummies pushing over my fans and being overly aggressive," he writes. "It wasn't the worst birthday because all my friends from back home flew in. I was just mad in the moment."

METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

The Word

Hollywood's next pint-sized power couple?



THE WORD
Dorothy Robinson
scene@metronews.ca

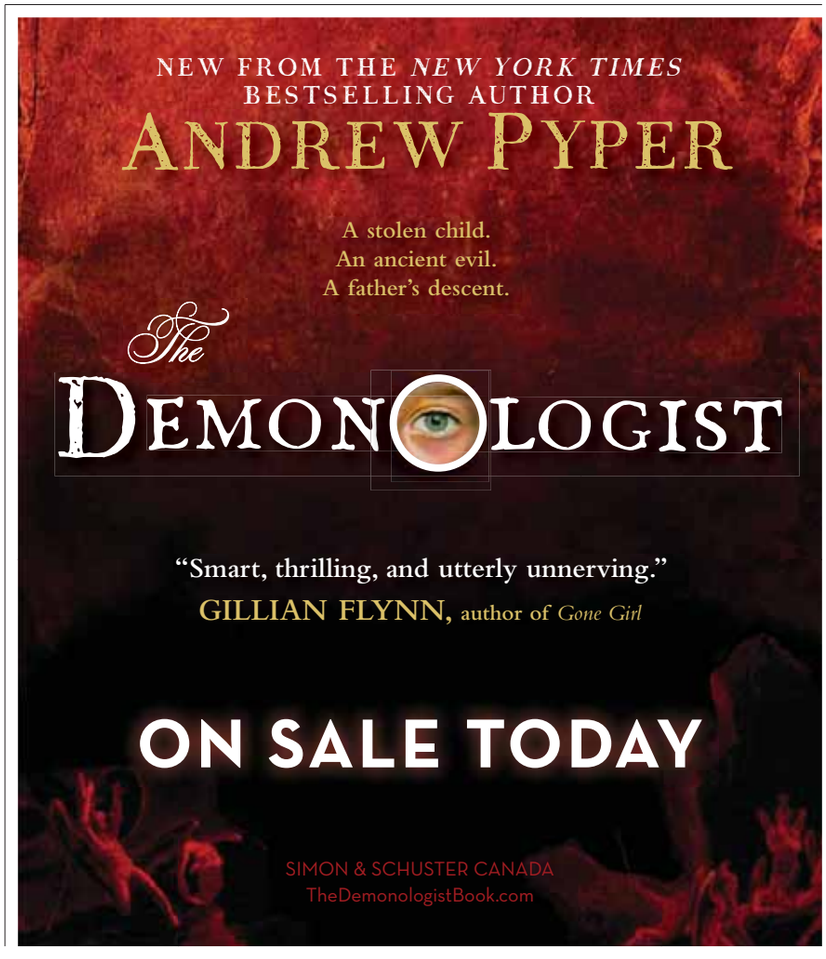
In today's Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous: The Prepubescent Set, it looks like Jaden Smith, 14, and Kylie Jenner, 15, are going steady.

"They're dating," says a source close to Jenner. "It's new, but they've been friends forever."

Jaden, who was in London recently for Justin Bieber's 19th birthday party, took Jenner to Caffe Nero in London's Piccadilly Square on Sunday.

Jenner was previously dating Australian pop star Cody Simpson. So this is it. Welcome to your future:

We're going to be reading about who these two are dating for the next 30 years. Starting now. Horrifying, isn't it?



The 50 Shapes Workout

Fitness. A new workout promises to get you toned and flexible enough to reenact the tricky sex positions in the Fifty Shades trilogy

ROMINA McGUINNESS
romina.mcguinness@metro.lu

You don't say no to this personal trainer. THINKSTOCK

Throughout the Fifty Shades trilogy, the main protagonists, Anastasia Steele and Christian Grey have "ridiculous, off the hook sex" every other day, Kristen James, the fitness trainer behind the 50 Shapes Workout tells Metro.

"I kept hearing women say, 'Who has the stamina or the flexibility for that kind of sex?'

"Anastasia wasn't just on her back. She was contorted all over the place."

But that's fiction. According to James, women are exhausted. "They don't have enough stamina in the bedroom."

James wanted her workout to help women look and feel better. "You should never have to turn the lights off during sex. I want them to develop the strength and confidence to reenact the crazy positions described in the books."

IN FOCUS: THE 50 SHAPES WORKOUT

The Pilates based exercises are designed to help you execute moves from the book. "The better you feel about your physical appearance, the more empowered and able you are to pleasure yourself and your partner," says James. "Over time, the workout will create long, limber muscles and help you bend over in a pair of really high heels."

Here's what it will help you achieve:

A strong core

With age, women tend to hold body fat around the midsection. The stomach area is what women dread the most, explains James, but doing moves that work your core will tighten things up. "A man likes to grab on to a nice cushy bum. Not a flabby tummy. Develop your core strength here (abs, obliques, lower back) and everything becomes much easier to execute," she adds.

Your abs will be on fire by the time you're done with the workout.

A taut pelvic floor

Kegel exercises will intensify your orgasms, says James. "After childbirth, the muscle is all stretched out and women may become a little less sensitive. Your pelvic floor is a muscle. If you strengthen it by doing Kegels, it will get so tight and taut so that when you do reach climax — sensations will be 10 times more powerful."

Get started by doing three sets of 10 James' Seductive Squats a day.

To purchase the 50 Shapes Workout, go to kristenjamesfitness.com.

Sample sexercises

Night moves

Seductive Squats

Stand with your feet wider than hip width apart and turn your toes out 45 degrees. With a neutral spine, elevate up onto your toes and lower your hips down to knee height. As you return up, perform one Kegel contraction.

Bend Over Better

Stand with your feet hip width apart, toes facing forward. Soften your knees. With your back flat, extend forward touching your toes. As you rise, elevate up onto your toes and extend your arms overhead.

Lusty Lunges

Stand with your feet wider than hip width apart and your toes facing forward. Lunge to the side deeply into one leg being sure to sit back into your glutes as you descend. Reach for your toe with the opposite hand as your other arm reaches overhead allowing for some rotation to your spine.

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LINDA CLARKE
Metro World News in NYC

Regular blood pressure check-ups are rated E for everyone. ISTOCK

Screening is an important part of preventative health care. We asked Dr. Michael Smith, chief medical editor of WebMD, which tests the average person needs and when.

In your 20s

Blood pressure
"Everyone should get their blood pressure tested — how often depends on the result: certainly during your annual physical, if it's higher, more often than that."
Diabetes
"Two-thirds of adults are overweight and possibly pre-diabetic."
Skin cancer
"Do regular self-exams (and) look for any changes. See your doctor if you're concerned."
HIV
"Depending on sexual behaviour, everyone should get tested at least once in their lives, especially when you're young."
Just women — cervical cancer
"Twenty-one is the recommended age for women to start pap smears."
Just men — testicular cancer "There's some controversy over testing for testicular cancer, but the American Cancer Society recommends age 20."

In your 30s

Cholesterol
"Anyone at risk should start in their 20s, but for everyone, by age 35 it's more essential."
Glaucoma
"There are no symptoms, but if you lose your sight from glaucoma, it doesn't come back."
Hypothyroid/Hyperthyroid
"The thyroid regulates metabolism and just about everything in the body. Testing is becoming more common, especially for women."
Just women — HPV
"Many women test positive in their 20s and it goes away. In your 30s, conditions should be monitored."

40s and above

Colorectal cancer
"At age 50, the ACS recommends colorectal screening."
Just women — breast cancer
"There's some controversy, but the ACS says at age 40 women should start mammograms every other year. Talk to your doctor about when to start testing."
Osteoporosis
"It's generally age 50. Sometimes women with a family history get tested earlier."
Just men — prostrate cancer
"Begin the discussion with your doctor at age 50. No one recommends regular PSA blood tests until then. But men at high risk begin in their 40s."

bodhi
well-being and healing center

We are an authorized center for Pranic Healing in Calgary. It is affiliated to the Canadian Pranic Healers Association in Canada as well as the World Pranic Healing Foundation and the Institute for Inner Studies, Philippines.

Pranic Healing is an ancient science and art of healing introduced by Grand Master Choa Kok Sui in the early 1990's. It is a highly advanced and potent, no touch, and no drug healing modality. In Sanskrit, 'Prana' means life force, which is synonymous with 'Chi' in Chinese or 'Ki' in Japanese.

PRANIC HEALING IS EASY TO LEARN AND APPLY. IT HELPS TO MAINTAIN GOOD HEALTH BY CLEANSING & BALANCEING THE ENERGY BODY. IT IS BASED ON 2 PRINCIPLE LAWS: 1 Law of self-recovery | 2 Law of life-energy

Pranic Healing can be used for treating as well as preventing physical, mental, emotional, and psychological problems. These techniques can be applied collectively in one's day-to-day life, including in maintaining one's relationships, finances, pets, plants and homes. Pranic Healing can also assist in the safe and rapid growth in one's spiritual journey.

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Want a fast, yet safe way to lose weight and look great? Almased offers an effective weight loss solution that boosts energy and preserves muscle mass. Its unique formula is clinically tested to support proper nutrition and quick weight loss. While other dietary supplements often contain caffeine, ephedrine or other harmful stimulants, Almased blends only fermented non-GMO soy, yogurt and honey, for a formula that allows the body to metabolize carbohydrates, fat and protein. You can also supplement your diet with Almased to maintain immune function and benefit from its metabolism-boosting benefits.

Over 10 years of scientific research shows Almased nourishes the body as it stimulates healthy, long-term weight management and overall good health. Maintain a healthy weight, promote a feeling of well-being and retain muscle mass with Almased.

7 Ways Almased works in the body

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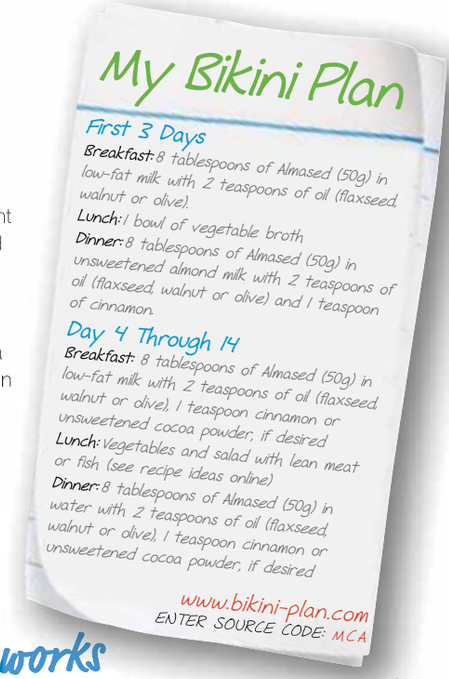
3. Has metabolism-boosting properties.
4. Keeps blood sugar balanced.
5. Keeps thyroid function balanced.
6. Helps the body to metabolize carbohydrates, fat and protein.
7. Is an antioxidant for the maintenance of good health.


My Bikini Plan
First 3 Days
Breakfast: 8 tablespoons of Almased (50g) in low-fat milk with 2 teaspoons of oil (flaxseed, walnut or olive).
Lunch: 1 bowl of vegetable broth
Dinner: 8 tablespoons of Almased (50g) in unsweetened almond milk with 2 teaspoons of oil (flaxseed, walnut or olive) and 1 teaspoon of cinnamon.
Day 4 Through 14
Breakfast: 8 tablespoons of Almased (50g) in low-fat milk with 2 teaspoons of oil (flaxseed, walnut or olive), 1 teaspoon cinnamon or unsweetened cocoa powder, if desired
Lunch: Vegetables and salad with lean meat or fish (see recipe ideas online)
Dinner: 8 tablespoons of Almased (50g) in water with 2 teaspoons of oil (flaxseed, walnut or olive), 1 teaspoon cinnamon or unsweetened cocoa powder, if desired
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Season for home improvements

Value. Different ways you can finance your project to spruce up your home

YLVA VAN BUUREN
For Metro

Home improvements can increase the value of a home — and often make living there more enjoyable, too. JUPITERIMAGES/GOODSHOOT/THINKSTOCK

Home improvements can increase the value of a home — and often make living there more enjoyable, too. Here are the most popular ways to borrow money to fix up your home this spring:

• Secured LOC: If you have equity in your home, probably the best, most convenient, and lowest interest rate product is a home equity line of credit. They can be had for prime plus a half a percent, says David Smith, a mortgage broker and partner at Oriana Financial, Toronto.

"An LOC gives you the flexibility to draw money when you need to and pay it back when you're able," says Judi Forbes, branch manager, Meridian Credit Union, Courtice, Ont. While there are usually fees, they are worth it if you are doing big renovations, she says.

• Unsecured LOC: "If you need a small amount, for example $10,000, I recommend looking at an unsecured LOC because there are no other fees," Forbes says. "The interest rates are higher but relatively low for borrowing."

• Refinancing: If you have equity available in your home, refinancing your home is a great option, says Anthony Williams, vice-president of academic affairs, Canadian Institute of Financial Planning. "If you took out a mortgage five years ago, refinancing the mortgage now to bump it for renovations will also likely get you a lower rate."

Often, when you refinance the existing mortgage, the financial institution will take the interest rate you are paying now, add the renovation funds to the amount, and blend those rates to whatever term you choose.

Should you get an LOC or refinance? It can depend on your borrowing habits, says Forbes. "If someone always carries a balance or max's out their credit cards, I would recommend refinancing the existing mortgage because it puts them on a regular payment plan."

Riding the interest rate train

Interest rates are at a 60-year low, which makes borrowing money for home ownership — and improvement — very attractive. But how long can these rates last?

"As long as the United States is committed to a zero interest policy we really can't raise our rates either," says David Smith, a mortgage broker and partner at Oriana Financial, Toronto. "I think we've got a good two or three more years to ride this train."

The Bank of Canada sets the bank rate, which is the rate of interest it charges major financial institutions when they borrow money. Then, the financial institutions set their own rates depending on the product, various market forces, and their own profit margins.

"The cheapest money is always money that's secured on a property," Smith says.

That means mortgages and secured lines of credit are the most inexpensive right now. Keep in mind that lines of credit are generally not as low because they are "revolving," Smith explains. "You can pay the money back and then re-borrow it while a mortgage doesn't typically allow you to do that."

Loans that are not secured on property are markedly more expensive, and credit cards carry the highest interest rates at 17 to 20 per cent, and as high as 29 per cent for store credit cards.

Experts recommend that consumers shop around and weigh interest rates against the product and the term.

You will find five-year rates for less than three per cent. "We're doing 10-year mortgages for about 3.65 percent," Smith says.

"I think in five years, rates will be significantly higher than they are now. So, yes, I'm doing five-year mortgages at 2.89 per cent and it is more expensive to take the 10. But you'll be protected in the long run."

YLVA VAN BUUREN

Are you looking for a new car? You will likely need financing for your new toy, so do your homework before borrowing. ISTOCKPHOTO/THINKSTOCK

Borrowing. Do your homework

KELLY PUTTER
For Metro

Time to trade in that old junker for a shiny sports car? Or perhaps you are jonesing for serious summer cruising on a new Harley or powerboat?

Either way, you will likely need financing for your new toy so what are the best ways to borrow without getting burned?

As practical and dull as this may sound, do your homework first, recommends Scott Hannah, CEO of Credit Counselling Society, one of Canada's largest organizations that helps people manage money and debt.

"People spend a lot of time looking at the features of their new toy," Hannah says. "But they've likely only spent about 15 minutes analyzing whether or not they can afford it."

Go online and find out. Think about worst-case scenarios: What if I lose my job? How much should I put down on the purchase? Do I have enough emergency savings on hand to pick up the slack if something happens?

Can you afford it?

"People spend a lot of time looking at the features of their new toy. But they've likely only spent about 15 minutes analyzing whether or not they can afford it."

Scott Hannah, CEO of Credit Counselling Society

It's always best to use cash on depreciating assets such as cars. But if that's not possible it's important to shop around for loans. Hannah suggests starting with the manufacturer's financing deal. Then see if your bank or credit union can match it. Be wary of low or no interest loans since manufacturers have built those savings into the cost of the vehicle and there is typically less room to negotiate on price.

When purchasing items that have a shelf life such as a vehicle, don't use a line of credit or low-interest credit card that offers rewards points, Hannah says. As attractive as they might be, it's better to get a low-rate term loan with a fixed payment since you will pay less interest and likely pay the loan off sooner.

The current interest rate on personal loans ranges from five to seven per cent. An unsecured line of credit runs one to four per cent, while credit cards generally hover around 20 per cent.

So if you are a good credit risk borrowing $20,000 over 72 months at 1.9 per cent, your monthly payments will be $295 and interest will cost you $1,245 over the life of the loan. By comparison, if your credit rating is poor you will pay six per cent in interest, which raises your monthly payments to $387. Over a 60-month loan period, the interest will be $3,250, nearly triple that of the borrower with good credit.

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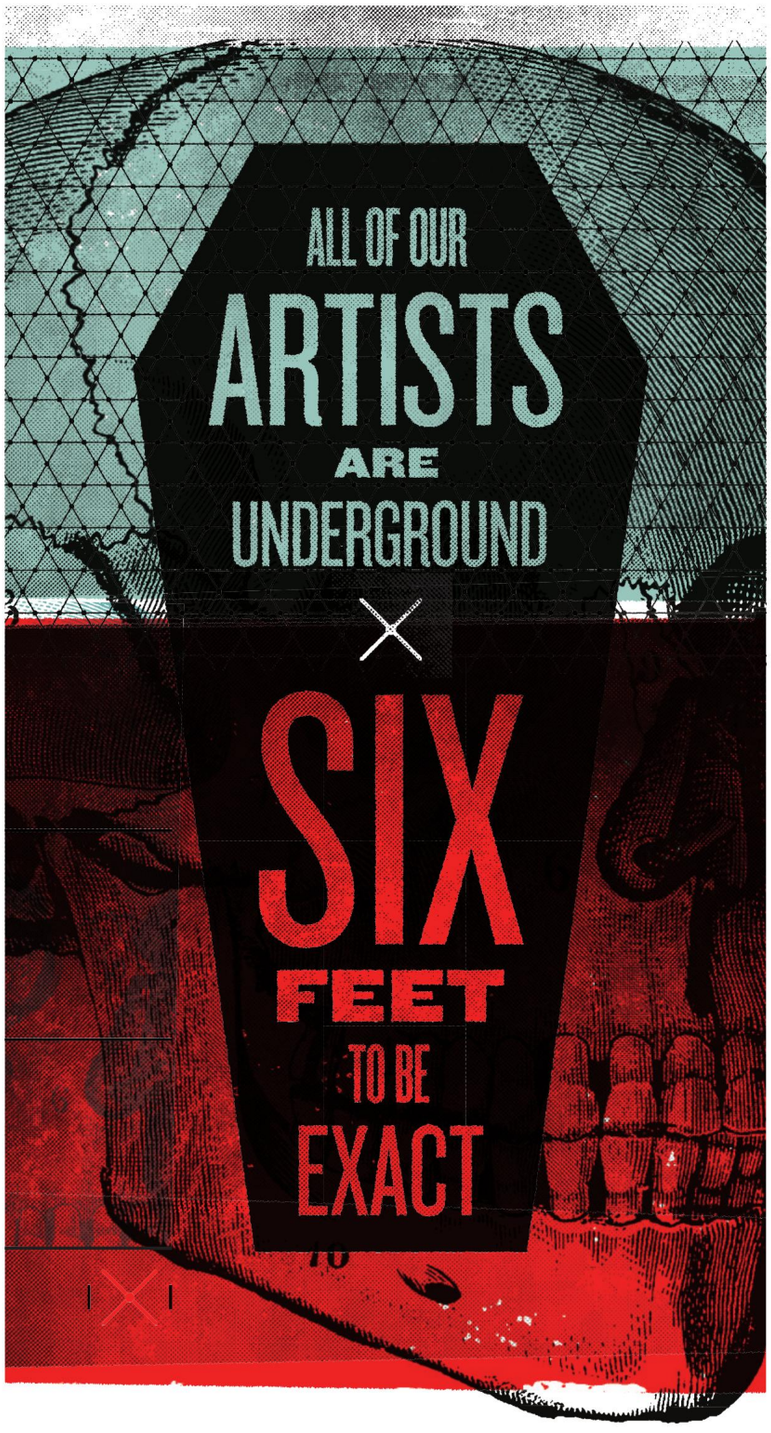

OPERA HITS

MARCH 7, 2013 / 6:30 PM

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Stuff salmon to perfection with olives and tomatoes

This recipe serves four. BRIAN MACDONALD, FROM ROSE REISMAN'S COMPLETE LIGHT KITCHEN (WHITECAP BOOKS)

ROSE REISMAN
for more, visit
rosereisman.com

This olive and sun-dried tomato mixture is incredible with salmon, but it also goes well with halibut or sea bass.

If you don't have both types of olives on hand, remember that green have a more intense flavour and black are milder. If you like, add some thinly sliced olives as a garnish.

1. Preheat the oven to 425 F. Spray a baking sheet with cooking oil.

2. Finely chop the olives, sun-dried tomatoes, breadcrumbs, oil, garlic and mustard, either by hand or using a small food processor.

3. Make a 1/4-inch vertical slit through the top of each salmon fillet to within 1/4 inch of each end. Divide filling and stuff the fish. Bake in centre of the oven 10 minutes per inch of thickness. Garnish with fresh parsley.

ROSE REISMAN'S COMPLETE LIGHT KITCHEN (WHITECAP BOOKS) BY ROSE REISMAN

Ingredients

- 3 tbsp chopped black olives
- 3 tbsp chopped green olives
- 3 tbsp chopped rehydrated sun-dried tomatoes
- 2 tbsp seasoned breadcrumbs
- 2 tsp olive oil
- 1 tsp crushed fresh garlic
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- Four 4-oz skinless salmon fillets
- 3 tbsp chopped fresh parsley

Health Solutions

Caviar of the people

NUTRI-BITES
Theresa Albert
DHN, RNCP
myfriendinfood.com

Caviar is an exclusive delicacy of fish eggs from sturgeon fish but there are other fish roes equally high in taste, vitamin B12, fat soluble vitamins including the nutrient du moment, vitamin D.

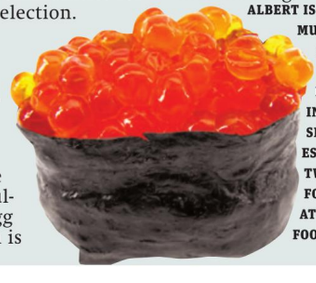
Culinary cultures from all over the world have made use of the roe from more plentiful cod, lumpfish and mullet. Search in French, Italian, Greek or Asian communities for the best selection.

- Poutargue is a Marseille, France specialty making use of the entire mullet fish egg sac which is salted, pressed and cured just like an Italian Prosciutto. It is meant as a thinly sliced garnish and is outstanding.

- Taramasalata is the Greek dip made from mashed potato, cod roe, olive oil and lemon juice.

- Lumpfish roe is the larger orange eggs found on sushi. Its bright orange colour and very salty pop add dimensions of flavour.

Fish eggs are highly salted and naturally high in cholesterol, but they are most often only enjoyed in small amounts as garnish. Go ahead, dine like the kings.



THERESA ALBERT IS A FOOD COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST AND PRIVATE NUTRITIONIST IN TORONTO. SHE IS @THERESAALBERT ON TWITTER AND FOUND DAILY AT MYFRIENDINFOOD.COM

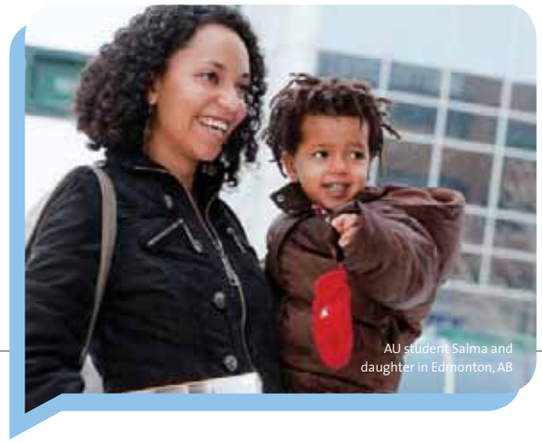
START A NEW JOURNEY TODAY

ISTOCKPHOTO/THINKSTOCK

You can have the career you want. All you need is the right training. In other words, you need continuing education.

Continuing education is offered at colleges, universities, training centres, and other institutions of learning across Canada. It ranges from single-day workshops to multi-semester courses and programs designed to make you a skilled professional in your chosen field. And that field can be nearly anything — from accounting to fashion design to automobile repair, among hundreds of others.

People turn to continuing education for different reasons. For some, it's because they lack the skills, knowledge, or accreditation necessary to get the job of their dreams. This may be because they entered the workforce straight out of high school, and therefore lack the post-graduate qualifications for which employers are looking.



AU student Salma and daughter in Edmonton, AB

For others, continuing education is a way to stay current. Technology and best practices evolve over time, no matter what kind of business you are in. Continuing education is a way of ensuring you stay at the top of your game. Even better, it can be a means for you to grow your career.

What if you are highly educated, but lack work experience? This is a problem for many university graduates, but it can be overcome through continuing education. With curricula attuned to the realities of the marketplace, continuing education programs teach you to apply your theoretical knowledge in a practical way. Many include internships, allowing you to gain work experience before you graduate.

Not all continuing education is this serious, of course. Many people seek it simply for personal interest. Have you always wanted to paint? Sculpt? Develop an appreciation for fine wine? You can find courses and workshops devoted to these topics and many more — all of them quick, affordable, and fun.

If you have a full-time job or family commitments (or both), furthering your education may seem like a luxury you can't afford. You needn't worry. Today's continuing education programs and courses are designed to be flexible, adapting to a range of personal schedules and lifestyles. Just look around — you will find both full-time and part-time programs, accelerated programs, even courses held on evenings or weekends. Some programs are delivered entirely online.

It doesn't matter how old you are, or how busy. It doesn't matter how long you have been in the workforce — or out of it. Continuing education can be your route to the career you deserve. And your journey starts today.

– Chris Edwards

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THINKING ABOUT A CHANGE?

CONTRIBUTED

CHECK OUT MOUNT ROYAL'S INFORMATION NIGHT ON MARCH 20

Find out what it takes to get yourself into a rewarding new career by attending the Community and Health Studies Information Night at Mount Royal University on March 20.

This event is where prospective students can find out about the almost 30 certificate and diploma programs MRU continuing education has to offer in the field of community and health studies.

"This is a unique opportunity to learn about every program we offer, ask in-depth career questions of our industry expert instructors and see the amazing learning environment," says Christina White Prosser, program director, community and health studies, faculty of continuing education and extension at MRU.

Programs range from full-time certificates and diplomas to part-time certificates that offer professional development in a myriad of health and human service fields. These fields include yoga therapy, massage therapy, birth doula, addiction studies, nursing education, and many more.

White Prosser says the health and human sector is ever-growing and constantly changing.

"When students graduate from MRU they not only have the skills they need to get a current job, we also ensure they have the skills to grow and evolve in their chosen field," White Prosser says.

Many of these programs offer flexible schedules and modes of teaching, including online cohort learning, blended learning and weekend or weeklong fast-track learning.

Some of these programs offer students the ability to take courses through MRU continuing education and then, if they decide to further their education, those courses transfer into degrees offered at MRU.

This free annual event runs from 4-7 p.m. on the second floor of the Roderick Mah Centre for Continuous Education.

By attending, enter for your chance to win a gift of tuition and other prizes.

For more about this info session, visit conted.mtroyal.ca/yourcommunity.

MAKE LEARNING FUN FOR KIDS

Just because the school year ends doesn't mean your child's education has to. This summer, make learning fun and enrol them in one of the Mount Royal University Kids Summer Camps.

Whether your child is the athletic type, crazy about science, or has a flare for the arts, MRU Kids has a program for whatever your kids are into.

New this summer, MRU Kids offers junior innovators for ages nine to 14. Also new this year is junior leaders, for ages nine to 14.

It's never too early to start lifelong learning, so enrol your kids today. For more, visit mtroyal.ca/mrukids.

BE ON THE FOREFRONT OF SOCIAL MEDIA REVOLUTION

Shift your focus and find out how social media can work for your business.

Immerse yourself in the world of social media on May 9 by attending MRU Shift, the social media revolution conference at Mount Royal University.

"MRU Shift 2013 is all about walking the talk and offering attendees (a.k.a. Shifters) a day worth of practice and opportunity to learn by doing," says Elaine Ori, program co-ordinator faculty of continuing education and extension, MRU Shift planning committee member.

"We want to offer Shifters the chance to strut their stuff by providing workshops, not just lectures."

This conference is all about experiencing social media, not just hearing about it. Social media is here to stay and this conference will teach individuals how to use this tool to have a leg up and effectively tap into a worldwide conversation.

"Shifters can expect their social media presence to factor into future employment," Ori says.

MRU Shift will be leaving the suits and ties at home this year and digging deep into the world of social media that has changed the way people have been interacting with each other over the last several years.

Take part in the Social Media Games over the lunch break of the conference and show off your creative prowess.

CONTRIBUTED

Social Media Shift will be held May 9 at the Roderick Mah Centre. Check-in will begin at 8 a.m., with a wine and cheese to follow after closing remarks at 4:30 p.m.

MRU offers many great programs and courses in social media, technology, communication, and public relations, just to name a few.

For more information about MRU Shift, visit mtroyal.ca/mrushift.

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Learn more about the many continuing education programming options available this spring on April 4.

"If you want to learn accounting, how to weld, how to build a website, find a summer camp for your kid, SAIT has something to offer," says Russell Wright, continuing education co-ordinator, SAIT School of Business. "This event is designed for anyone looking to improve their knowledge and earning potential by upgrading their skills and resumé, as well as for those interested in getting involved in something new just for fun."

SAIT's part-time programs are offered all year round.

"Our programs are very diverse and offer something for everyone," Wright says.

For anyone looking to continue their educational journey, Wright says continuing education can provide an easy and affordable way to improve skills, or transition between careers.

This event will be held April 4 at the Irene Lewis Atrium in the Stan Grad Centre from 4:30-7:30 p.m., with a representative from each school within SAIT present to answer questions about their programs. On-spot registration will also be available.

For more about this free information night, visit sait.ca.

CONTRIBUTED

JACK HOLLINGSWORTH/PHOTODISC/THINKSTOCK

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Students will receive the same instruction as the students in the six-month, full-time, in-class program, but over a span of 12 months.

The flexibility of this program is great for students who can't commit to being in class full time because of other life commitments such as jobs or family.

Digital School is a private career college that offers students a hands-on accelerated training diploma that prepares them to work in the high demand field of computer-aided design.

With new intakes four times per year — the next being April 2 — now is the time to speak with an admissions adviser to get your career in CAD started soon. This program is also eligible for student loans.

CAD courses include computer-aided drafter certificate, architectural CAD diploma, and engineering CAD technician diploma with process piping specialization.

For more, or to speak to an admissions adviser, visit digitalschool.ca.

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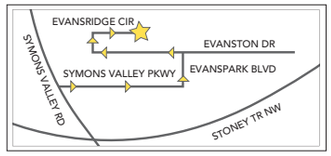

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Safeguarding your savings

Allison on Money. With less time to recover losses, it's time to protect what you've got

YOUR MONEY
Alison Griffiths
money@metronews.ca

A Vancouver acquaintance recently told me about his financial mess. He had owned a condo, which he loved, in Vancouver near foodie heaven, Granville Island.

During the rising market he decided to buy down and put a big chunk of cash into his thin retirement savings.

The moment he put the condo up for sale last spring, the market softened. He gambled by purchasing a cheaper condo, which had just dropped significantly in price.

His reasoning was that he got such a good deal on the purchase he could afford to take less on the sale of the existing condo and still come out ahead financially.

But prices softened again and as a result he owned two condos in a falling market. Eventually he was forced to sell the condo he loved to pay for the one he didn't. Worse, he didn't pocket any additional cash. Now at the age of 59 he feels he's ruined his future.

What's the lesson here? First and foremost, protect what you've got, particularly as the years roll on, because you have less time to recover losses.

A new Investor Education Fund (getsmarteraboutmoney.ca) study showed that half of those over 50 believe they'll run out of money in the first 10 years of retirement.

It isn't easy for the average person to put together a nest egg, be it a savings account, equity in a house or business, or a pension. Never, ever gamble with your nest egg. I had a prime example of how that mindset worked growing up.

My dear departed dad wasn't a genius with money, but he had one great asset, a civil service pension. He protected it as one would a baby. Even during the family's hard times when he lost his job and subsequently returned to school, he resisted the temptation to cash it in.

Bear in mind, back in the 1970s and '80s many took pensions for granted. Cashing in didn't seem like such a big deal. Thanks to his vigilance, he ended up with a comfortable retirement even though he still had a mortgage.

Learn from my Vancouver friend and my dad. Safeguard savings or home equity and never gamble with them for any reason.

Contact Alison at griffiths.alison@gmail.com or alisongriffiths.ca

In numbers

33%

33 per cent of Canadians don't believe they have enough saved for retirement.

Savour your family's dinnertime

The chef. Metro talks to Vikram Vij about eating with your kids and his upcoming online cooking show

THERESA ALBERT
life@metronews.ca

Vikram Vij, an award winning chef in Vancouver, wants to help you find time for family meals. His mission starts in the form of Canada's first live online cooking show.

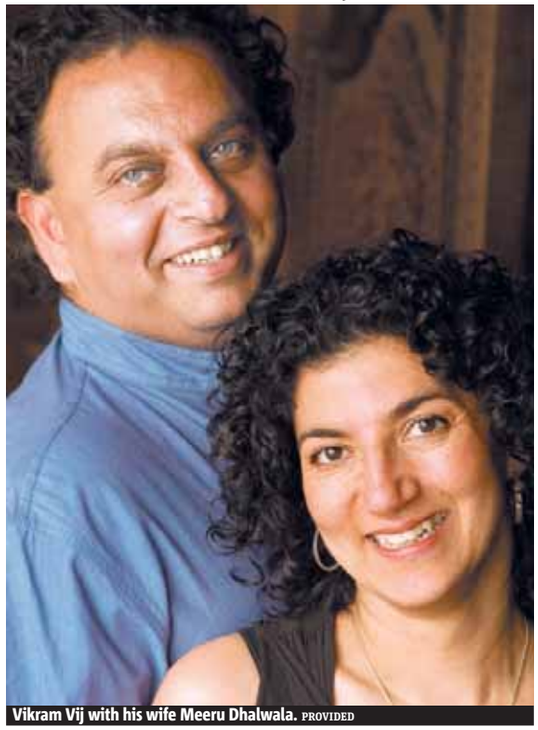
His simple Indian meal is family friendly and he will show you step by step in a cook- along live video broadcast with Metro at metronews.ca/vijcooklive this Thursday at 6 p.m. ET.

Better yet, questions can be tweeted live during the show using the hashtag #vijcooklive.

Did you grow up eating with your family? In Canada?
I grew up in India and left home at 19. There, it was a cultural routine to have family dinner because my dad was very strict and he insisted on dinner at 8 p.m. every possible night. Even at 17 years old, when I had plans to go out and eat with friends, he would insist that we sit and listen to talk. At the time, it seemed too strict but my father wanted to connect with his family and it taught me not to gallivant like some of my friends were, which kept me out of trouble. Now as a parent myself, I can't do this every night, but on my days off at home it is a more formal affair on Sundays and Mondays where the kids set the table and we cook, savour and appreciate.

How old are your kids?
My children are now 14 and 16 and I find I learn a lot around the dinner table just listening to them talk to each other about their lives and their friends. There is also an opportunity to model moral lessons. It is an osmosis process. They see everything in the interaction between the parents. I learned social lessons at the dinner table watching my father dominate my mother, who was a typical Indian woman. I learned to protect my mother when she needed it. Kids learn to resolve conflict in this setting and remove themselves from it when it isn't appropriate for them to be involved. Eating together keeps people interacting and that is an important part of life.

Is this a job, career or mission?
Feeding people has deep roots of awareness of cuisine and culture for me growing up in India. I love Canada, it is my home now, but sharing my homeland is a passion. More than anything, eating together is important, but in my culture, we serve food as a symbol of sharing. It is a mission and goal to get kids eating real food and to get families talking again.



Vikram Vij with his wife Meeru Dhalwala. PROVIDED

What is so great about eating with the family? Most families bicker!
What's wrong with slight bickering? If you are using pots and pans in the kitchen, it's going to make noise. If you have people coming together, they are going to make the same noise. It's natural. That's what life is all about. The problem happens when the noise becomes too loud, but people have to understand how to handle that too. You can't be fearful of the discussion. I would rather have someone to bicker with than be alone and eating. Humans need to discuss and debate, it's natural.

What's your take on picky kids? Is it a North American phenomenon?
My dad was the child at the table because he didn't like spicy food, but for me, I always wanted it spicier. Now, one of my children doesn't like spice. I find that funny. The thing parents need to be sure of is that kid's bodies will tell them to eat. They will eat what is put there. The only trick is to slowly integrate flavours into the meals and get them accustomed to it. It builds cultures to share food and experiences. In this world, we need to have friendships among cultures. It increases the tolerance level of differences.

How many families do you know who are all home at the same time? Are we being impractical?
Listen, family meals don't mean that you have to be all together all the time. The effort needs to be made, that's it. The physical art of being together in the room, sharing food simply needs to be a goal. Split shifts can work, come back to the table for a cup of tea and talk. Or it can be lunch or breakfast. Let's communicate.

Tips from Vikram

What are some tips to help get a family meal on the table?

- First, go shopping and think slightly ahead. It's good to be whimsical but be well stocked. One bag of pasta is the same as the effort as getting a whole pantry filled.
- Don't stress about meals, they can be simple as long as you see it is beautiful to nourish your body and your soul. Have fun! The day it is a chore you lose passion. Just do it. On the fly.
- There is nothing to fear about learning to cook. If you had a guitar in your house, you would pick up the guitar and play music and it wouldn't sound very good. After 10 times, you could create a semi-musical, reasonable note. So, maybe the meal won't turn out perfectly the first day, it will eventually work.
- Confidence is gained when you repeat.

Cooking with Vij

- Want to cook along with Vij? A complete shopping list and the recipes for his online cooking show are available for download at metronews.ca/vijcooklive.
- Remember to go online Thursday at 6 p.m. ET for Canada's first live online cooking show.

Brad May, daughter crazy about cache hunts

Former NHL star Brad May and his 13-year-old daughter Samantha are on the hunt. The Stanley Cup winner and the teen are among the family teams battling it out on the new YTV show Cache Craze, which begins airing Saturday.

The competition show — where teams of two search for virtual caches that can only be unlocked after they climb, crawl and jump through over-the-top outdoor obstacles — is providing an opportunity for May, who was away from his family while playing hockey, to bond with his daughter.

Metro recently spoke to the father-daughter team about the show and the chance to work together.

Why did you want to be involved in Cache Craze?
Brad: It was a great opportunity to spend time with my daughter. We love competition! Also, the prize was a draw — a chance to win a $10,000 school fund for Samantha.

Sam: I was actually asked to participate by one of the producers so I then needed a partner. After my older brother and mother both declined, I was only left with my dad.

What have you learned about each other that you didn't know before filming the show?
Brad: We are so alike. Didn't realize how much until we started filming the show. My daughter is stubborn and found out that I was too.

Sam: Agreed with my dad. We can both be stubborn.

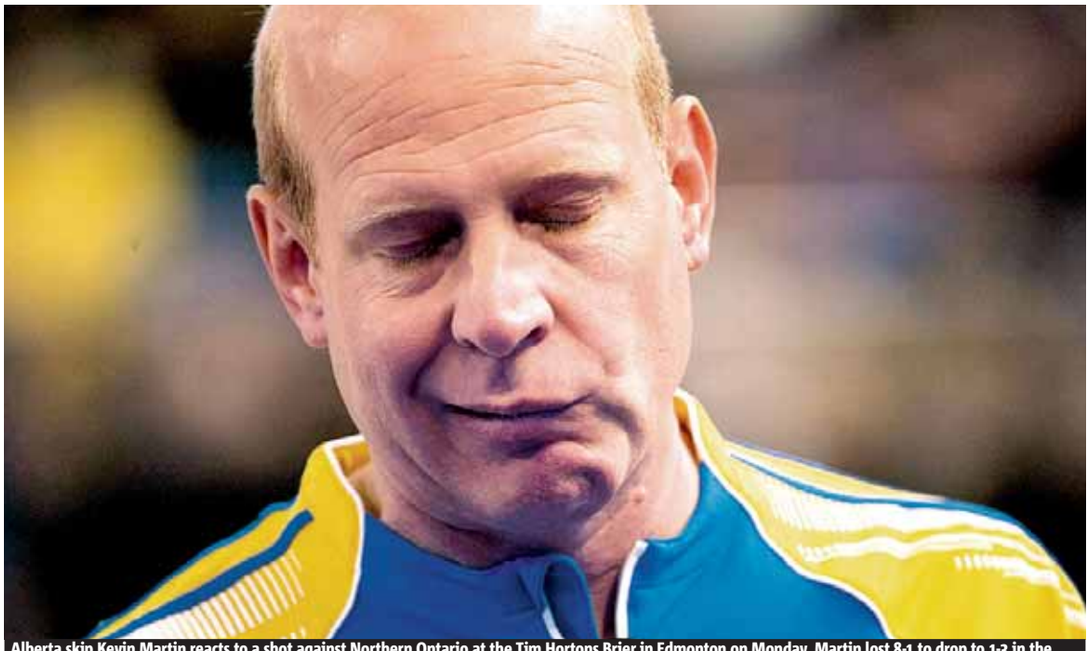
Who is the most competitive and why?
Brad: We are both competitive, but we also play fair. Samantha is so tough. She persevered throughout the show. She also found a way to dig deep and get the job done.

Sam: That's easy. It's me. I learned from the best and seeing my dad play hockey all of my life, how could I not be competitive?

Who has the better natural sense of direction?
Brad: Me. I am very good with directions.

Sam: I know my way around, but as mentioned, I can be stubborn and that sometimes gets in the way of the most direct route.

What is your advice to parents and children on how they can build relationships?
Brad: Patience, love, a firm hand and a set of morals. Laughter goes a long way. And listening. Stop what you're doing and think about what you were doing at their age — your perspective will change. METRO



Alberta skip Kevin Martin reacts to a shot against Northern Ontario at the Tim Hortons Brier in Edmonton on Monday. Martin lost 8-1 to drop to 1-3 in the competition. JONATHAN HAYWARD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Martin gets rocked by Northern Ontario

Curling. Host team slow out of the gate with 1-3 record

Quoted

"You get down that many, the odds of coming back aren't very good." **Alberta skip Kevin Martin** on losing 8-1 to Northern Ontario.

The hometown team is struggling at the Canadian men's curling championship.

Alberta's Kevin Martin lost 8-1 to Northern Ontario's Brad Jacobs on Monday, dropping the reigning Olympic champion and four-time Canadian champion to 1-3.

"It is hard to hang your head," Martin said. "There's no reason to, I think. It's just we've got to smarten up and curl better."

The top four teams at the conclusion of the round robin on Friday advance to the Page playoff.

Three losses don't put Martin's team in the danger zone yet, but the Edmonton foursome is running out of wiggle room early at the Tim Hortons Brier.

"Three is safe, but we have three already so we have to get on a roll, bottom line," the skip said.

The host committee certainly wants its star attraction playing into the weekend. Martin hasn't won a Brier in his hometown yet in his career. The 46-year-old can set a record for the most Canadian titles won by a skip if his team can right the ship.

Defending champion Glenn Howard (4-0) of Ontario and Brad Gushue of Newfoundland and Labrador (5-0) were still undefeated after the evening draw. Jacobs sat at 4-1 after a 9-8 loss to Gushue in the evening.

Three-time Canadian champion Jeff Stoughton of Manitoba defeated Quebec's Jean-Michel Menard 7-6 to put both teams at 3-1.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

MMA

UFC heading to Winnipeg

Sources have confirmed to Metro that UFC will make its Winnipeg debut in the coming months.

The pay-per-view event, UFC 161, will take place at the MTS Centre on June 15. The fight's main event will feature former light-heavyweight champion Rashad Evans taking on former Strikeforce champ Dan Henderson.

More details are expected at an announcement by True North Sports and Entertainment Tuesday. Watch Metro for all the details.

METRO IN WINNIPEG

NFL

Ravens sign Flacco to $120M deal

Baltimore Ravens quarterback Joe Flacco signed a new contract Monday worth $120.6 million US over six years, making him the highest-paid player in NFL history.

Joe Flacco
GETTY IMAGES FILE

The Super Bowl MVP will receive a $29-million signing bonus and $52 million in guaranteed money. He will be paid $51 million over the first two years of the deal.

Flacco, 28, threw 11 touchdown passes and no interceptions during the recent post-season and led the Ravens to a 34-31 Super Bowl win over San Francisco.

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Joey Votto walks into the dugout before a Cincinnati Reds spring training game against the San Diego Padres last week in Peoria, Ariz. CHRISTIAN PETERSEN/GETTY IMAGES

Votto packs his bags to join Team Canada

WBC. With injury concerns eased, star first baseman will suit up for national team

Joey Votto wanted to say sorry, but only for making everyone wait on the best news Canada has had ahead of the World Baseball Classic.

The Cincinnati Reds first baseman will be in Canada's lineup after an uncertain spring training kept him from committing to the international tournament. Votto missed 48 games last season with a knee injury, but on Monday he finally put to rest fears that Canada would be without the heart of its offence.

"I was very clear to everyone that I needed the games to make sure my knee was healthy and heading in the right direction," he said at Reds training camp. "I feel confident in it and confident in my commitment. I feel I can comfortably play."

The Toronto native needed to be sure of that before saying yes to Canada.

"I've never been hurt before," said Votto. "I wanted a little more of a grace period before the tournament to make sure I'm ready for my primary commitment to the Cincinnati Reds."

The news brought a sense of relief to Canada's training camp, which opened Monday morning.

Earlier in the day the team learned Chicago White Sox reliever Jesse Crain was out with a shoulder injury, leaving the bullpen without a veteran arm. Last week, Pittsburgh Pirates catcher Russell Martin opted out of the roster, which was already missing several veterans, including outfielder Jason Bay and pitchers Ryan Dempster and Jeff Francis.

Losing Votto would have been another major blow, but he was committed to playing for Canada. Once he decided he was healthy and had the Reds' blessing, there was no way he would miss the WBC.

"I grew up with a few of the players on the team and that goes beyond any of the Team Canada stuff," said Votto. "These are the same guys from my hometown or within a few minutes of where I grew up. You very rarely get a chance to play with your neighbour."

Votto, the 2010 National League MVP, is a career .316 hitter, with 133 homers and 457 RBIs. Manager Ernie Whitt said the 29-year-old's importance to the team couldn't be overstated.

"I would be lying if I said there wasn't nervousness, but we're really excited to have our No. 3 hitter in there," said Whitt. "He means a lot to this ballclub. So we're really thrilled about that."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Two Canucks to watch

Brett Lawrie

Lawrie, then just 19 years old, made an appearance as a pinch runner in 2009 WBC but never had an at-bat for Canada. Now the Blue Jays third baseman, Lawrie will try to make his mark at the tournament. The Langley, B.C., native had 11 homers, 48 RBIs, 73 runs and a .273 average in 125 games last season.

Jameson Taillon

Canada's not-so-secret weapon, Taillon was the second overall draft pick in 2010 behind Washington star Bryce Harper and is expected to anchor the Pittsburgh Pirates' starting rotation in the next few years. Born in the U.S. to Canadian parents, Taillon was recently ranked 15th among 100 MLB prospects.

Quoted

"It's big, obviously. Not only is (Votto) Canadian, but one of the best players in the tournament no matter where he's from."

Justin Morneau on Joey Votto's decision to join Team Canada. Manager Ernie Whitt said Votto and Morneau would likely swap games at first base and designated hitter.

NHL. Sabres' Kaleta gets 5 games for hit on Richards

The NHL suspended Buffalo's Patrick Kaleta for five games Monday, its stiffest punishment of the season.

The Sabres forward shoved Rangers centre Brad Richards from behind and into the boards on Sunday night.

The suspension will cost the gritty right-winger more than $72,000 in salary, and he won't be eligible to return until March 17, when the Sabres play at Washington.

The ruling came down a day after Kaleta blindsided Richards in the back and sent him sliding headfirst into the boards in the third period of Buffalo's 3-2 shootout loss at New York. Kaleta was assessed a major penalty for boarding and a game misconduct, which resulted in an automatic review by the league's department of player safety.

In reviewing the play on a video posted on the league's website, NHL disciplinarian Brendan Shanahan noted Kaleta shoved a defenceless player from behind. He added, "Kaleta is in full control of this play, and has ample opportunity to make a better decision."

Shanahan took into account that Richards was shaken up, but returned soon after. He also noted Kaleta had been suspended twice before in his career. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Patrick Kaleta of the Buffalo Sabres hits New York Rangers centre Brad Richards from behind on Sunday in New York. Kaleta was suspended five games for the hit by the NHL on Monday. BRUCE BENNETT/GETTY IMAGES

Own the Podium

Calgary's Read steps down as Sochi Games near

Ken Read is resigning from one of the most powerful positions in Canadian sport.

The former Crazy Canuck on the Canadian men's alpine ski team is stepping down as director of winter sport for Own the Podium less than a year out from the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia.

The 57-year-old from Calgary says "it was time to step away and move on."

"I've been with OTP in one form or another for a decade," Read told said on Monday. "That's a long time.

"I'm absolutely 100 per cent dedicated to what OTP and the concept of what it does for sport in Canada, but I also believe that you're multi-tasking, dealing with a lot of sports. There's a time where you can be doing that and then you step aside and give other people opportunities."

Canada's goal at the 2014 Olympics is to win more medals than any other country and to finish in the top three in gold medals won at the Paralympics.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Ken Read stepped down as director of Canada's Own the Podium winter sports program on Monday. THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

Six highlights at the half

The lockout-shortened NHL season has featured several surprises as it nears the midway point — some pleasant and others downright ugly. Here's a look at some highlights of the abbreviated campaign so far.

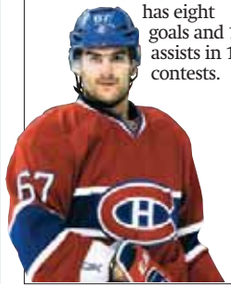
THE CANADIAN PRESS
Photos by Getty Images

Historic Hawks

The Chicago Blackhawks (19-0-3) have put together a record season-opening run after facing questions about their goaltending and character. Chicago has yet to lose in regulation. Starting goaltender Corey Crawford has posted a 1.41 goals-against average. Meanwhile, Patrick Kane ranks among the league's top scorers.

Habs holding No. 1

The Canadiens, sitting in top spot in the Eastern Conference, have undergone a resurgence during coach Michel Therrien's second stint behind their bench. Max Pacioretty, announced Monday as the NHL's first star of the week, has eight goals and 12 assists in 18 contests.

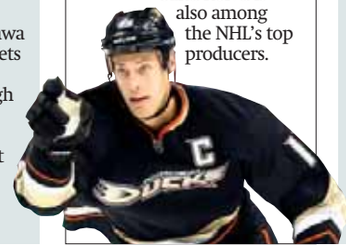


Success in Canada

Don't look now, but the Toronto Maple Leafs are sitting in the middle of the pack in the East. The Vancouver Canucks, Ottawa Senators and Winnipeg Jets are also positioned well. Ottawa is playing at a high level despite key injuries and Winnipeg is in the race to win the Southeast Division.

Ducks rejuvenated

After missing the playoffs last season, the Ducks have a firm hold on second place in the West. Coach Bruce Boudreau has made the Ducks appear mighty again. Captain Ryan Getzlaf ranks among the league's top scorers after struggling last season, and 38-year-old Saku Koivu is also among the NHL's top producers.

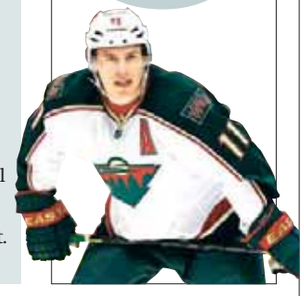


Scoring duel

Two young stars are battling for the NHL scoring lead. Pittsburgh's Sidney Crosby is clearly back in top form after missing most of the past two seasons with concussion issues. Meanwhile, Tampa Bay's Steven Stamkos is demonstrating that he will not surrender the goal-scoring title that he won last season without a fight.

Wild finding balance

The Wild have gotten back in the playoff race after adjusting to the arrival of new high-priced stars Zach Parise and Ryan Suter.



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NBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
Miami	44	14	.759	—
Indiana	38	22	.633	7
New York	36	21	.632	7½
Chicago	34	26	.567	11
Brooklyn	34	26	.567	11
Atlanta	33	26	.559	11½
Boston	31	27	.534	13
Milwaukee	30	28	.517	14
Philadelphia	23	35	.397	21
Toronto	**23**	**37**	**.383**	**22**
Detroit	23	39	.371	23
Cleveland	20	40	.333	25
Washington	19	39	.328	25
Orlando	17	44	.279	28½
Charlotte	13	46	.220	31½

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
San Antonio	47	14	.770	—
Oklahoma City	43	16	.729	3
L.A. Clippers	43	19	.694	4½
Memphis	39	19	.672	6½
Denver	39	22	.639	8
Golden State	33	27	.550	13½
Houston	33	28	.541	14
Utah	32	28	.533	14½
L.A. Lakers	30	30	.500	16½
Portland	27	31	.466	18½
Dallas	26	33	.441	20
Minnesota	20	37	.351	25
Phoenix	21	39	.350	25½
New Orleans	21	40	.344	26
Sacramento	21	40	.344	26

Note: division leaders ranked in top three positions regardless of winning percentage.

MONDAY'S RESULTS
New York 102 Cleveland 97
Miami 97 Minnesota 81
Milwaukee 109 Utah 108 (OT)
Orlando 105 New Orleans 102
Denver 104 Atlanta 88
Charlotte at Portland
Toronto at Golden State
SUNDAY'S RESULTS
Miami 99 New York 93
Oklahoma City 108 L.A. Clippers 104
Memphis 108 Orlando 82
Sacramento 119 Charlotte 83
Washington 90 Philadelphia 87
San Antonio 114 Detroit 75
Houston 136 Dallas 103
Indiana 97 Chicago 92
L.A. Lakers 99 Atlanta 98
TUESDAY'S GAMES — All Times Eastern
Boston at Philadelphia, 7 p.m.
L.A. Lakers at Oklahoma City, 9:30 p.m.
Denver at Sacramento, 10 p.m.

NHL

EASTERN CONFERENCE

ATLANTIC DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Pittsburgh	23	15	8	0	81	67	30
New Jersey	22	10	7	5	54	60	25
Philadelphia	23	11	11	1	66	68	23
NY Rangers	20	10	8	2	51	51	22
NY Islanders	22	9	11	2	64	75	20

NORTHEAST DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Montreal	22	14	4	4	68	53	32
Boston	19	14	3	2	57	42	30
Toronto	23	14	9	0	68	57	28
Ottawa	23	12	7	4	52	44	28
Buffalo	23	9	12	2	60	73	20

SOUTHEAST DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Carolina	21	12	8	1	63	59	25
Winnipeg	21	10	10	1	55	64	21
Tampa Bay	22	9	12	1	76	71	19
Washington	20	8	11	1	55	59	17
Florida	22	6	11	5	55	82	17

WESTERN CONFERENCE

CENTRAL DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Chicago	22	19	0	3	70	41	41
St. Louis	21	11	8	2	60	61	24
Detroit	22	10	8	4	61	59	24
Nashville	22	9	8	5	46	54	23
Columbus	22	6	12	4	49	66	16

NORTHWEST DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Vancouver	21	11	6	4	61	58	26
Minnesota	21	11	8	2	49	51	24
Calgary	20	8	8	4	57	68	20
Colorado	20	8	8	4	50	60	20
Edmonton	21	8	9	4	51	58	20

PACIFIC DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Anaheim	21	15	3	3	75	60	33
Phoenix	22	11	8	3	67	63	25
San Jose	20	10	6	4	47	44	24
Dallas	22	11	9	2	61	63	24
Los Angeles	19	10	7	2	49	47	22

Note: A team winning in overtime or shootout is credited with two points and a victory in the W column; the team losing in overtime or shootout receives one point which is registered in the OL (other loss) column.

MONDAY'S RESULTS
Toronto 4 New Jersey 2
Pittsburgh 4 Tampa Bay 3
Phoenix 5 Anaheim 4 (OT)
Nashville at Los Angeles
SUNDAY'S RESULTS
Chicago 2 Detroit 1 (SO)
NY Islanders 3 Ottawa 2 (SO)
Columbus 2 Colorado 1 (OT)
Dallas 4 St. Louis 1
Carolina 3 Florida 2
NY Rangers 3 Buffalo 2 (SO)
Montreal 4 Boston 3
Minnesota 4 Edmonton 2
Calgary 4 Vancouver 2
TUESDAY'S GAMES — All Times Eastern
Montreal at NY Islanders, 7 p.m.
Tampa Bay at New Jersey, 7 p.m.
Boston at Washington, 7 p.m.
Buffalo at Carolina, 7 p.m.
Edmonton at Columbus, 7 p.m.
Colorado at Detroit, 7:30 p.m.
Philadelphia at NY Rangers, 7:30 p.m.
Winnipeg at Florida, 7:30 p.m.
Minnesota at Chicago, 8:30 p.m.
San Jose at Vancouver, 10 p.m.
St. Louis at Los Angeles, 10:30 p.m.

MAPLE LEAFS 4, DEVILS 2

First Period
1. Toronto, Kadri 9 (Macarthur, Komarov) 10:34
Penalties — McLaren Tor (Boarding) 2:36, Clarkson NJ (Interference) 7:28, Ponikarovsky NJ (Slashing) 11:29.
Second Period
2. New Jersey, Zidlicky 2 (Carter) 5:43
3. New Jersey, Zidlicky 3 (Carter) 11:18
Penalties — Franson Tor (Interference) 17:38.
Third Period
4. Toronto, McClement 3 (Unassisted) :39
5. Toronto, Macarthur 6 (Kadri, Franson) 7:25 (pp)
6. Toronto, Kessel 5 (van Riemsdyk, Gunnarsson) 9:52
Penalties — Matteau NJ (Hooking) 1:56, Loktionov NJ (Tripping) 7:17, Bozak Tor (Hooking) 14:52, Kadri Tor (Freezing the Puck) 19:47.
Shots on goal:

New Jersey	**8**	**10**	**12—30**
Toronto	**5**	**5**	**13—23**

Goal — New Jersey: Hedberg (L, 2-5-2). Toronto: Reimer (W, 8-3-0).
Power plays (goal-chances) — New Jersey: 0-4. Toronto: 1-4.
Referees — Tom Kowal, Wes McCauley.
Linesmen — Mark Shewchyk, David Brisebois.
Att. — 19,435 (Air Canada Centre).

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers.

Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
Whatever goes missing from your life today is something you can well do without, so wave it a fond farewell and turn your attention to more urgent matters.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
A barrier of some kind may be imposing but you can find a way around it if you try. Stay calm, be patient and look for the key in areas you would not usually consider — that's where it's most likely to be.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
Do you listen to a friend's advice or do you listen to an expert stranger? Maybe it would be better if you listened to no one's advice but your own. What does your inner voice tell you? Act on it.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
Be blunt with a partner who is clearly taking liberties. You may not want to hurt their feelings but it would appear they are too thick-skinned to take a subtle hint — so give it to them straight.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
Don't choose the easy option today just because it seems quicker. Appearances can be deceptive and you may wish you had taken more care, devoted more time and done a proper job the first time.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Raise your game today. You may not be the most outgoing of people but you have what it takes to make a name for yourself. Over the next 24 hours, you'll get the chance to shine. Don't waste it.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
No matter how busy you may be, you must make time for partners and loved ones. Someone close is desperate for your attention, so put aside what you are doing and let them know you still care.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Something you say could be taken the wrong way and provoke a reaction. This is the kind of situation that could escalate rapidly, so it might be wise just to apologize.

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Your instincts should be telling you that the best way to deal with a difficult situation is to leave well alone. That applies especially to ego clashes.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
An important relationship may be under some stress but don't worry about it. The planets suggest that everything will work out for the best in the end, so forget it and focus on more enjoyable things.

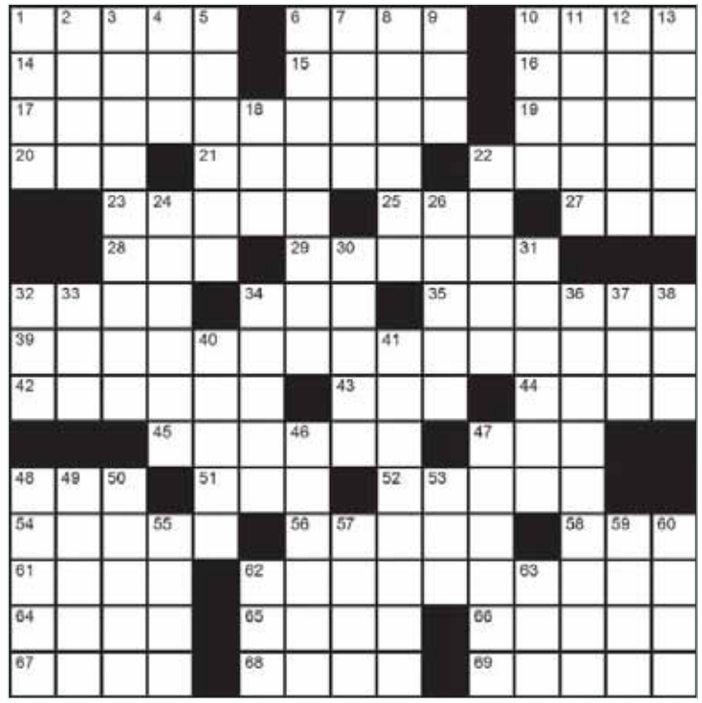
♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
There are so many things you want to do yet so few things you can do, which is no doubt frustrating. Your time will come, so stick with it. As always, everything will change when you least expect it to.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
Why are you tempted to grab what you can and make a run for it? Maybe it's because you can sense that time is winding down and if you don't do something soon the chance may pass you by. Maybe you're right.

SALLY BROMPTON

Crossword: Canada Across and Down

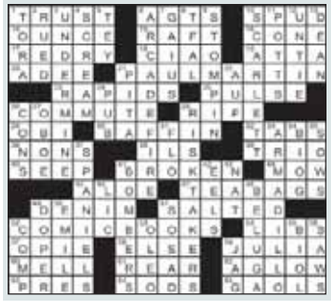
BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



Across
1. Most read national daily newspaper in Canada
6. Noon: French
10. Red Serge force, commonly
14. Love: French
15. Gulf of __ (between Somalia and Yemen)
16. Eurythmics' "Would _ __ to You?"
17. Big screens at sporting events
19. Mr. MacDermot (Canadian composer of Hair)
20. Beast of burden
21. "Push" band from Vancouver
22. __ and Shuster
23. "Have _ __." (Relax)
25. __ _ disadvantage
27. Church speech, for short
28. Intl. commerce group
29. "Where's that map?!": 2 wds.
32. "...so long __ __ both shall live?"
34. Granny: German
35. Pineapple: French
39. Toronto's plays/musicals area: 2 wds.
42. Toronto's St. Lawrence __
43. 0 Meridian letters
44. Company dept. heads
45. Lug along, variantly
47. "Go team!"
48. Reserved
51. Bien __, Vietnam
52. Pilot's button
54. Poet W.B.
56. Nobleman
58. Antonio's "Evita" (1996) role
61. Old Scandinavian symbol
62. In Ontario on Lake Huron, it's the world's biggest lake island
64. Pottery pieces
65. Volcano in Sicily
66. Downloaded-from-Apple song
67. Shar-__ (Some dogs)
68. Lang. of Rome
69. Concrete-strengthening rod

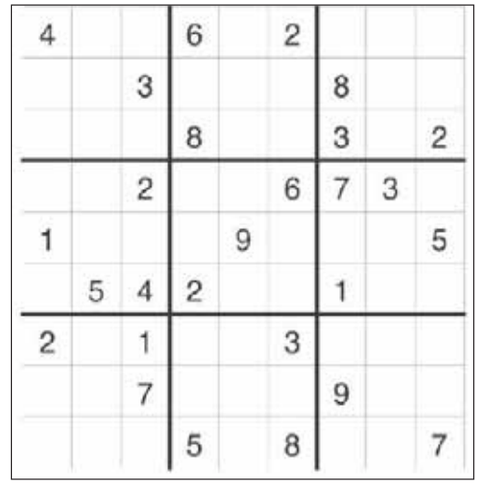
Down
1. Goya painting, The Naked __
2. Ostrich-like birds
3. Rush song: 2 wds.
4. Chafe
5. "_ __..." (Start of Juliet's famous line)
6. __ Provinces
7. Wedding vows: 2 wds.
8. __ floss
9. Advantages
10. Latvia's capital
11. Singer Mr. Aiken's
12. Author A.A.
13. __, Paul and Mary
18. "Prelude __ _ Kiss"
22. "Hmmm, I __ aware of that."
24. Grill servings
26. Breakfast serving
30. Madonna's nickname
31. Runway surface
32. Li'l bank-in-the-wall
33. Doo-Wop music syllable
34. Prefix to 'dontist' (Braces giver)
36. Bouncer's workplace
37. SNL or NASA, e.g.
38. Haloed humans, for short
40. Comp. help givers
41. 'I' of CIBC
46. Canadian brewer
47. Impressionist painter
48. Maple product
49. "Quelle __ est-il?" (What time is it?)
50. New Age musician
53. Quickly write down
55. D'Urbervilles heroine
57. Tolstoy's __ Karenina
59. Susan Aglukark's "__ Na Ho (Celebration)"
60. Vitality [abbr.]
62. "Help __ _ think I'm falling..." - Joni Mitchell
63. 'Comp' completer (Calculate)

Yesterday's Crossword



Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.



Yesterday's Sudoku

3	7	5	6	9	8	4	2	1
4	2	6	3	1	5	7	9	8
9	8	1	4	7	2	5	3	6
5	1	7	9	6	3	2	8	4
6	3	4	8	2	7	9	1	5
8	9	2	1	5	4	3	6	7
1	6	3	5	4	9	8	7	2
7	5	8	2	3	6	1	4	9
2	4	9	7	8	1	6	5	3

Weather

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METEOROLOGIST
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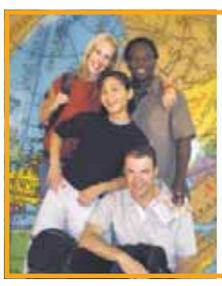
WEEKDAYS 5:30 AM

	TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
	MAX: -6° MIN: -12°	MAX: -6° MIN: -11°	MAX: -8° MIN: -11°



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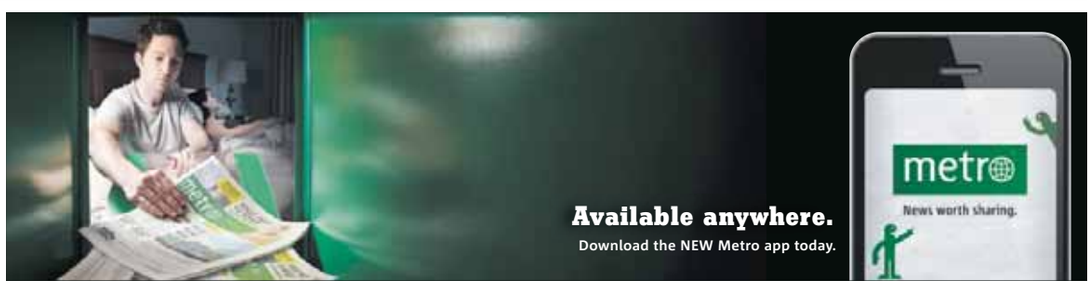

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